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[THE COURAGE OF INNOCENCE.]

SNOWFLAKES' SHADOW, SUNBEAMS' SHINE.

A CHRISTMAS STORY OF TWO WORLDS.

CHAPTER XI.

I see it is a trick
Got up betwixt you and the woman there.
I must be taught my duty, and by you!
You knew my word was law, and yet you dared
To slight it!

TENNYSON.

GASTON MOWBRAY threw a disdainful glance round the little squalid apartment and one still more contemptuous at the poorly attired, pale-faced girl who stood by his son's side.

Neither of the men extended his hand or made any advance of friendly recognition, though it was long since the sire and son had last met.

"Ronald," said Gaston, abruptly, "I have tracked you to this miserable refuge for a purpose which touches you nearly. I have but little time to stay, and my words must be addressed to your ear alone. Perhaps this young lady, with whom you appear to be on such very intimate terms, will favour me by postponing her agreeable interview till another time."

As he spoke Gaston looked at Rose in a manner so insolent that the girl's pallid face flamed scarlet.

She made no movement to retire, however, and Ronald glanced irresolutely from one to the other without replying.

"Humph! Hard of hearing, I suppose," said Gaston.

Then, advancing to Rose, he tendered the tips of his white fingers, as though to lead her from the room.

The girl sprang back, as if the extended hand had held a venomous serpent.

"Ronald," she said, in an excited whisper, clinging meanwhile to the young man's arm, "is he your father?"

Low as was her tone the last word caught Gaston's ear.

The intruder's brow wore a scowl, his lips a sneer, as he turned to his son and asked, with curt emphasis:

"Who is this girl?—to be trusted, eh?"

"She who was my affianced bride, sir, ere you blighted my life happiness—Rose Dacre," the young man answered, sullenly. "You need fear nothing of betrayal from her."

"Good," said Gaston. "Of course the young lady will leave us for a time while we indulge in affectionate congratulations. My dear," he went on, turning to Rose, "if you will pass a half-hour in gossip with the very amiable female who opened the door to me you will oblige me much."

"Please go, Rose," pleaded Ronald, in a low tone. "Stay with the landlady for a few minutes. Our conference will be but short."

"Oh, Ronald," the young girl whispered, as she pressed the young man's hand with a convulsive clasp, "my heart forbodes that this is an eventful hour for you. Be firm, my love. Keep in the narrow path of right, whatever betide, and all will be well."

And she glided from the room.

"Be seated, Ronald," said Gaston, as he placed himself on one of the rickety chairs. "As you have said, our conference need only be brief,

but it will nevertheless be momentous—at least for you."

"Father," responded the young man, "for you are my father, notwithstanding all that has passed, I would that this interview could be spared to us both."

"It cannot, Ronald. Nor should you desire it. What! is this the way a son should meet his parent? Come, your hand, boy!"

Gaston extended his own.

Ronald glanced at it with a perceptible shudder, but made no responsive movement.

"You will not clasp my hand?"

"Pardon me, father," cried the young man, passionately, "but I cannot."

And he hid his face in his own palms.

"Ah! may I ask why?"

"Need you ask? Is it not dyed with murderous stains?" responded Ronald, in broken tones. "Was it not when last I saw it the instrument of death?"

"A necessary deed, Ronald."

"Necessary! Ay, with the need for evil deeds which binds the wrong-doer. Oh, father, can you speak so calmly of that terrible day? No night passes but in my broken sleep I see again that hand—my father's hand!—slowly and surely bringing to death a fellow man! The scene haunts me as a vision from the depths below!"

"This is childish, Ronald. My time is far too brief to waste in these mock heroics. The policemen sought my life. Necessity compelled me to doom one of them to death. We each ran the risk entailed by our respective professions. No more of this at present. You will be wiser by-and-bye. Did you receive the last remittance I sent to the University by a sure hand before I

left this country to evade the hue and cry which followed the incidents of that day?"

"I did."

"It was a large sum. I had foreseen that a lengthened period might elapse ere I dared again seek these shores, and sent you ample means. When I was able to institute inquiries I found you had left your college. With great difficulty I have traced you hither. I find you apparently in abject poverty. Why even with the aid of this"—and he contemptuously touched the goblet which stood on the hob—"you need scarcely have been brought to this pass."

"It was unavoidable."

"Indeed! May I ask whether Miss Rose Dacre, who looks to the full as much like a pauper as yourself, has assisted you in running through eight hundred pounds in less than twelve months?"

The young man's face flushed angrily.

"I do not know by what right you ask such a question, sir," he said. "But I will answer it. She has not."

"What right! The right of one who has cared for you from infancy to this day—who has toiled for you, risked repute and even life for your sake—the right of a parent to the honour and obedience of his child."

"Father! words like these are useless," the young man replied, huskily. "I love you still. I love you for the very memory of the past. But all is now over between you and me. If it was indeed for my sake that you sought the crooked ways which led to so ill an ending I am indeed accursed of Heaven. Had we both lived the humblest life, eating the coarsest food earned by honest labour, I had been happy. Look at me now! I am a man blasted in his early promise—one whom the consciousness that he is a felon's child has eaten away the very heart from—one who is lost to the world, broken in spirit, ruined in name, bankrupt in fortune!"

"The young man who cannot exist on eight hundred a year may easily become the latter," responded Gaston, drily.

"I scorned to touch the polluted wages of sin!" cried Ronald, excitedly, springing to his feet. "I would have died first!"

"You can hand it back to me then."

"I cannot. It was none of yours. I sent every farthing of it anonymously to different charitable institutions."

Gaston gave utterance to a fearful imprecation.

"You were not so mad?"

"Yes. Let us hope that some bitter pain alleviated, some wrung heart rejoiced by its agency may plead for us both at a higher tribunal."

"Cease that cant!" cried Gaston, harshly. "Ah, I can account for your penny now. I trust it has borne fruit in bringing you some wisdom. No more of the past. You are perhaps better prepared for my purpose than if I had found you an indolent, nerveless pet of affluence. You have felt the iron grip of poverty. I can see that you have fled from its bitterness to the consoler of the wretched—drink! So be it. I too have no distaste for the wine cups so that it does not interfere with business. Do you not wish for the means of escape from this degradation? Do you not desire a name and a position among men—with wealth and all that wealth can buy?"

"If they may be obtained honestly—yes."

"Ah, yes. I respect your scruples, Ronald," said his father, with an ill-concealed sneer. "What I am about to propose to you is that you should occupy a position in the commercial world second to few. You will have no connection with me—ostensibly at least. No penny of mine will be invested in the concern. The men with whom you would co-operate are the élite of the Stock Exchange and of the resorts of merchants. Your duties will be merely nominal—your salary princely. Do you like the picture?"

"It is too bright to be possible—a mirage of deceitful hope."

"Not so. All the preliminary steps are taken already and the concern will be launched at the New Year. Do you consent?"

"How is it possible that I should gain such a post?"

"I will give you an introduction to the City magnates whose word will be law in the matter."

"You—a proscribed—felon!"

The young man hesitated at the words.

"Do not mince your phrases for my sake, boy. They'll not harm me. Yes, I can do this. I have not always been what you but now termed me, remember. There was a time when Gaston Mowbray held his own with the best. In the affairs of life there are ever circles within circles. If men who in far-off years have been indebted to me and choose now to aid a protégé of mine is that anything remarkable?"

Instead of replying Ronald eyed his father curiously.

He noted the fashionable cut of his attire, the fineness of his linen, his daintily varnished Parisian boots, the heavy chain which traversed his vest, the diamond rings which sparkled on his white hands.

"How do you live, father?" he queried, suddenly.

"By honest courses, Ronald. I am connected with various continental schemes of solvency and magnitude of which you shall know hereafter. But my offer—do you accept it?"

A painful, irresolute expression came over Ronald's face.

It was obvious that his first repulsion towards his parent was greatly weakened. To his broken-hearted and ease-loving spirit the prospect looked irresistibly tempting.

"You are sure that you will not be connected with the affair, father?"

"I swear it."

"That it is no bubble company of men of straw?"

"It is an affair of the grandest scope, and its adherents are all men of mark—two are millionaires."

Again the young man lapsed into deep thought.

A rosy vision floated before his mind. If this were possible his life might yet be honourable and happy.

Rose might still be his bride.

Gaston sat watching the changes which flitted over his son's face.

His thin lips curved into a look of sarcasm so obvious that he discreetly hid it under one dainty hand.

"Should I be free to choose my own path in the world—to wed whom I pleased, for instance—without interference from you?"

"Of course you would. You are of age. Marry your little Rose and make a lady of her."

He drew a handsome gold watch from his pocket and resumed:

"You must decide at once, Ronald, for my time has nearly expired."

"I think I can agree to it then, but—"

"Your hand on it."

Ronald extended his palm slowly and with evident reluctance.

But the hands of the two men were not fated thus to meet.

Rose Dacre had seen the Ducie equipage returning along the street and had gone upstairs to take farewell of her lover.

The latter part of the dialogue, during which Gaston had somewhat raised his voice, struck on her ear.

Urged by an irresistible impulse, the girl forgot her better nature for the moment and played the part of eavesdropper, though her face flushed crimson with shame at the act.

A terrible foreboding came to Rose as she listened to Gaston's glozing promises.

An inward monitor seemed to whisper with energy not so be gainsaid: "These are but the wiles of the tempter. Quick! or your beloved is lost!"

She opened the door noiselessly and entered the room.

Ere Ronald's hand touched that of his father

the impetuous girl sprang to her lover's side and drew him back from the contact.

"Do not say the word, Ronald!" she cried, vehemently. "Do not sell your soul to the tempter! For my sake—oh, Ronald, for my sake—be true to yourself and to right!"

A heavy scowl crossed Gaston's sinister face at the interruption.

By a rare effort of dissimulation, however, he banished it and said, with some courtesy:

"I am sorry you have listened to what has passed between Ronald and me, Miss Dacre, and that you have interfered in a manner unusual for ladies when men have business to talk over. However, Ronald, you agree?"

As he spoke Gaston took his hat from the table and began to draw on his gloves.

But Rose's interposition had effected a change in the young man's thoughts.

The remembrance of his father's career flashed scathingly through his brain. No! No good thing could come from hands so polluted.

"Father," he said, with firmness. "I thank you for your goodwill, but decline the tempting prospect."

"Think better of it, Ronald. Do you wish time for consideration?"

"I have decided. I shall not change."

"Decided to live and die a pauper?"

"I shall not be that. I can work."

"Fool! Your shaking hand cannot hold brush or maulstick—and who would purchase these miserable daubs?"

He glanced scornfully at the canvas which stood on the easel.

"They will find purchasers, sir," interposed Rose, with spirit. "Ronald has found one patron to-day—ah! here she is!"

A tap had sounded on the door, which Rose opened.

It was Dora, whom the landlady, with her usual brusque carelessness, had told her to "walk upstairs," which at last the girl, tired of waiting, had done.

"This is Miss Ducie, Ronald, who bought your picture to-day and has promised her influence to get you commissions."

At the name Gaston stepped back a pace. His face was distorted by passion till it scarcely resembled that of a human being—his teeth were clenched—a ferocious glare sprang to his eyes.

"Another of that accursed race!" he yelled.

"Ay, and the image of her false, heartless mother. Away, girl! I am not master of myself at sight of you! Away! before I crush you as I would a venomous reptile!"

As Gaston spoke he advanced towards Dora with a fiercely threatening gesture.

The girl did not flinch. Her soft blue eyes looked steadily into the glaring orbs which menaced her. Her lovely face took not on the slightest shadow of fear.

Ronald sprang forward and seized his father's upraised arm.

"Do not be alarmed," said Dora, in her calm, soft voice. "He will not injure me. Why should he? Poor man! Trouble has perhaps made him mad. I know him, for he can be none other than my mother's brother, Gaston Mowbray. Ah, sir! you have had a cowardly vengeance which has stricken innocent hearts. Oh, repent, and life may yet give you opportunities to redeem the past! Night and morn when my petitions arise for the safety of the brother whose life you have blighted I mingle your name too with my hopes. This has been a happy day to me in that I have found a cousin whom I hope to aid. Do you, also, when the hymn of Christmas echoes through the still air to-night resolve to expiate the wickedness of the past by a new life and thus make this a day of happiness, even for you?"

A strange look came over Gaston's face as he gazed at the girl's speaking countenance—as he listened to her words of forgiveness and peace.

Without a word—without a glance at his son—but with eyes fixed as if spell-bound upon Dora's features—he gained the door and passed from their sight!

CHAPTER XII.

See how red the streamlets flow,
See the reeling, yielding foe,
How they melt at every blow,
Yet we shall be free! CUNNINGHAM.

For a few brief moments after the last breath of the Maori maiden had passed away Percy Mowbray still sustained her lifeless form, gazing meanwhile with a strange remorseful, half-dazed look at the calm face, to whose beautiful features the peace of death but added sweetness.

The shouts and yells of the pursuing savages waxed louder and louder. It seemed that those who gave utterance to the cries were converging to the spot where the fugitives rested.

The elder man laid his hand upon Percy's shoulder to arouse him from the trance into which he had fallen.

"Poor girl!" he said, in a pitying tone. "She has perished for our sakes. That is but the greater reason we should attempt to preserve the life she has bought so dearly. There are others too who claim you. Let us make an effort to escape these yelling fiends. Think of Dora."

The name acted as a charm upon the young man.

With his hunting-knife he severed one of Koe-Koe's long black tresses, then laid the dead girl's head tenderly and reverently on the matted foliage, spangled with bright flowers and stained vividly with her heart's blood, and sprang to his feet.

"You are right, father," cried Percy. "Let us avoid if possible falling into the hands of our pursuers. But I wish to observe the dying injunction of our guide. We will not slay her people if we can preserve your life without doing so. For my own sake I would scarcely lift a hand. I am as an accursed thing who bring ill fortune to all whom I love."

Without further words the two men pushed onward as rapidly as the tangled undergrowth of the forest would permit.

As however Percy was about to tear down a thick screen of climbing stems and foliage he suddenly desisted from the endeavour and, instead, peered cautiously through the interstices of the broad leaves, having first turned a meaning look upon Horace, also laying his finger upon his lip as an injunction to the latter to keep silence.

Just before him Percy saw a large amphitheatre of clear space, bounded by a circle of the gigantic columnar stems of the Kauri pine, whose leafy heads shot up high aloft to the moonlit sky. The open ground was evidently the bed of an extinct volcano, as shown by its cup-like formation and the masses of scorin and pumice-stone which lay thickly around, partially hidden by waving flax leaves.

At the grass-covered bottom of the arid declivities which sloped downward for some distance a group of Maories was plainly visible.

They were evidently deeply engaged in a koriko, or talk, which, judging from the animated gestures of the interlocutors, must have been upon some subject of deep interest.

The tableau which the savages presented would have charmed the eyes of sculptor or painter could one have looked upon it unenvied by the perils which beset the fugitive spectator.

Those tall, broad-shouldered, deep-chested, semi-nude forms, as they leaned on their guns around the erator who stood in their midst in the clear moonlight which gleamed through the tree-tops and threw their figures into strong relief, resembled antique bronzes of Roman warriors.

Some words spoken with raised accents by the gigantic savage who was haranguing the assemblage struck on Percy's ears.

"Father," he said, in a cautious whisper, "take my gun and remain here. I will endeavour to creep nearer. It may import us and others much that I should learn the meaning of this conference."

The soldier silently obeyed the young man's

bidding and received the piece, and the next minute Percy, with the stealthy step of a wild animal, passed noiselessly from his side.

Horace strained his eyes anxiously as he glanced over the space below.

The soldier was not unaccustomed to detect those slight indications by means of which in wild countries man is often so enabled to save his own life or destroy that of an enemy, whether the foe be wild beast or still more savage human being.

As he scanned carefully the slopes that led to the spot where the Maories stood he noted that in one shallow gully, thickly overgrown with flax-plants, a tremor slowly passed downward along the foliage.

No breath of wind stirred the broad leaves around Horace Mowbray.

Animal life is not abundant in New Zealand. The agent which caused the movement was not then a crouching wild beast but Percy, bent on his perilous quest.

Minutes passed like slow hours to the soldier.

The koriko still went on, and, Horace could now distinguish in his rear the faint but increasing sounds of the pursuers' cries.

As the soldier's uneasiness became almost insupportable he noticed a shiver run through the distant flax-stems, but this time ascending the shelving bank of the crater.

In a few seconds more Percy stood by his side.

The yells of the band who had chased them rang around now.

"Father," said the young man, in a hurried undertone, "I have gleaned most important intelligence. These are the advanced guard of a large band who intend to fall upon the British force, now, I find, not far distant. The attack will be made two hours before daybreak, when they expect to find the soldiers most unprepared. If we can reach our countrymen in time we may warn them of their danger and save them."

Ere they could turn to leave the spot a burst of shouts sounded on the farther edge of the natural basin, which was echoed by a chorus of cries from the Maori warriors beneath.

The next moment the Englishmen saw a dark band of men emerge from the columns of tree-trunks and descend the slope towards those who occupied the space below.

The new comers bore a burden carefully, and when they reached their fellows deposited it slowly on the grassy ground.

The others gathered closely around.

Percy's heart told him it must be the body of the girl who had sacrificed her life for him.

Loud cries of wailing broke from the dark mass below. These were quickly succeeded by vengeful howls—the war-cry of the Maori.

Without further delay Horace and Percy took to rapid flight.

They shaped their course through the tangled and at times almost impervious thickets, guided by the clue afforded in the last words of Koe-Koe.

As they fled their ears were strained for sounds of pursuit, but the silent forest echoed only to the weird call of the kakapo, a New Zealand night-bird that, half owl, half parrot, possessed of impotent wings which have no power of flight, seems one of the works of Nature's 'prentice hand.

The night was far advanced when the fugitives reached the forest's margin. They bore evident traces of the reckless passages they had made. The uniform of the soldier, which had been thrown into the pit beside him when he was bound to the log and which he had caught up on his escape therefrom, was hanging almost in shreds and the hands and faces of both showed deep scratches, from which blood trickled freely.

The light costume and better woodcraft of Percy had however stood him in good stead, and he was much less exhausted than his companion.

After traversing a limited extent of comparatively open ground, broken however by some small pyramidal volcanic monticules, the wan-

derers could discern immediately before them in the bright moonbeams the English encampment.

"We will go forward together," said Percy. "If we be challenged you can satisfy the sentries. But we will proceed noiselessly, for I have a fancy to discover what watch and ward our countrymen keep."

Horace assented and the two men sped on with swift, careful steps. They had not taken many paces before Percy pulled up with a start of surprise, having almost trodden on the prostrate form of a man!

He was lying still and quiet, half hidden by the waving flax which grew thickly around. A musket which had escaped from his grasp rested beside him.

From the man's posture Percy at first supposed him dead, but the deep, audible respiration soon showed that he was in a profound slumber.

The young man's lip curled as he said, scornfully:

"A pretty sentinel!"

Horace Mowbray's voice had also an accent of contempt as he replied:

"A civilian volunteer! He should never have been placed here. Wait till we come to the military outposts."

Advancing through a swampy ravine towards the encampment, Percy's quick eye presently detected a human form leaning against the trunk of a magnificent kaiketara tree, and a light breeze bore to his nostrils the pleasant odour of tobacco.

He pointed out the sentinel to Horace, saying meanwhile with a subdued laugh:

"One of your soldiers, and not much more on the alert than the citizen. We'll pass him in true Maori fashion."

He threw himself down in the low scrub which covered the rocky ground on which they stood and caused Horace to follow his example, and creeping noiselessly forward, the two men passed the sentry still complacently puffing at his pipe.

"Had the Maories reached the place they would have made their onslaught at a terrible 'vantage,' said Percy. "Let us on. Point out to me the tent of the commanding officer."

They pushed on, evading observation until the resting-place of the leader of the expedition was reached.

Here at last they met vigilance. The sentinel who paced to and fro before the post brought down his musket sharply at sight of the fugitives and challenged them peremptorily.

"A man of the 99th, my friend," answered Horace—"your own regiment. I wish to see the colonel without a moment's delay. I and my friend here have intelligence of the utmost importance to communicate."

After a short delay the colonel was aroused from his slumbers and Horace and Percy admitted to his presence.

The surprise of the officer was extreme at both the audacity of the savages in their intended night attack and the astounding fact that his lines of outpost had been penetrated with such ease by his nocturnal visitors.

The young man's story was too coherent and too earnestly told however to admit of doubt, and with a somewhat troubled brow the commandant and his small staff prepared to receive the expected assailants.

Nor had they long to wait. Careful outlook of vigilant eyes, aided by night glasses, revealed the fact that the scrub and bushes in that part of the position which the fugitives had gone through were becoming filled with the advancing enemy.

An incautious word of command given loudly by one of the English officers told the Maories that their approach was detected, and with tumultuous war-cries they sprang from their covert and rushed upon the encampment.

The English, nothing loth, received the assailants with a well-directed volley of musketry, which stretched many a brawny savage on the earth, and then the fight became a hand-to-hand one of a most fierce and determined kind.

The commandant retained Horace and Percy Mowbray by his side in the central position

which he occupied, against a pile of volcanic rocks of no great height, somewhat behind the first line of defenders, and whence he could direct his forces advantageously.

Suddenly wild yells in the rear of this station were heard, and a dark mass of savage warriors swarmed round the little low cliff where the colonel stood.

The foe had not been expected from this direction.

This was evidently a band acting in concert with but distinct from the war party of Ngaraunga, which had come from the pah of Ruapaka-peka.

In the first wild onset Horace Mowbray fell, stricken heavily by a stone axe.

Ere the blow could be repeated Percy raised his musket and, murmuring "For her sake I will not slay," fired low at the assailant, the bullet breaking the Maori's leg and bringing him helpless to the ground.

Scarcely had he fallen when Colonel Chadwick, stricken by a musket ball, reeled back against the cliff beside the prostrate body of Horace.

Percy took in the situation at a glance. The mass of shouting, bloodthirsty savages who crowded round with vengeful cries cut them off from immediate aid from their countrymen.

Like a flash came the thought "They cannot assail us in the rear, because the rock forms a barrier not easily surmounted. I will save my father and this noble-looking white-haired Englishman who spoke to me so kindly awhile ago. I will save them or die—but I will not knowingly kill the men of Koe-Koe's race."

He stood erect and firm in the strength of his youth and grand, sinewy frame before the wounded men—he grasped the discharged musket firmly by the muzzle and looked unflinchingly at the circle of dark faces, to which the moku lines lent added ferocity.

The next instant twenty foes sprang forward.

Club, spear, stone hatchet and knife-blade clashed against his guard.

Stepping back a pace from the fierce rush, Percy swung the heavy gun around his head as though it had been a willow wand and immediately it swept in a half-circle from left to right with terrible and irresistible force, clearing for the time his front of the swarming foes.

Five times, despite some flesh wounds, the brave youth thus repulsed the foe.

Then arose the loud British "Hurrah!" behind his assailants, and directly afterwards a rush of the blue-jackets who formed part of the expedition cleft the throng of Maories, their bright outlasses flashing swiftly in the work of death.

The trio were saved.

As Percy threw down the now fractured musket Colonel Chadwick staggered towards him and tendered his left hand—his right arm, wounded by the Maori bullet, hanging limp and useless by his side.

"Young man," he said, with fervent emphasis, "I thank you. You have saved my life this night—a service for which most men are grateful. But you have done far more than this. Had it not been for the notice which you and this soldier gave me," and he pointed to Horace Mowbray's pale face upturned to them, "I should have been surprised, defeated and disgraced. Whether I had fallen on the field or my life had been spared I had been in either event a dishonoured man—an English officer beaten by a horde of savage warriors! You have saved my honour and my life, and there is no earthly service within my power I will not render in return."

(To be Continued.)

MECHANICAL FAN.

A NOVEL instrument for producing a refreshing current of air in a room, capable of being used in a lady's hand, in lieu of the usual fan, has been devised by General Franzini. By means

of clockwork in the handle, set in motion or stopped at will, by pressing a button an oval plate is caused to revolve. On its longer axis is an oval frame, in shape and size like that of the hand looking-glasses commonly in use. The revolving plate may be either a plain metallic sheet or a piece of plate looking-glass, and the frame is susceptible of any amount of ornament. The lady is thus saved the exertion of waving the fan in her hand. A similar instrument of a larger kind may be placed on a table, concealed, if desired, by a bouquet of flowers.

OH! DOUBTING HEARTS.

Oh, weary, doubting hearts, bowed down
with care,

Whose burden seemeth more than life
can bear,

Whose feet along life's dusty, rough
highway,

Aching and weary, still must journey
on,

O'er the sharp rocks that lay
Scattered along the way,

Through the dark night, and in the
misty morn!

Oh, toilers by the way!
Oh, gleaners in the harvest field of life,

Whose hearts are weary with the toil
and strife,

The heat and conflict of each passing
day;

Who glean like Ruth, from dewy morn
till eve,

While hot tears fall upon each golden
sheave,

Mourning like her, o'er loved ones early
dead;

While in strange lands and ways,
Far from the joys and griefs of early
days,

Far from the loved one's tomb, thy
weary feet are led.

Oh, weary hearts, hearts weary of the
world,

And all its empty pageantry and
show,

For whom the brightness of the morn
unfurled;

The glare of noonday, and the bright,
warm glow

Of summer evenings and of sunny skies,
Bring only vain regrets, consuming
sighs.

Oh, sad hearts, all look up!
Above the darkest clouds the warm
sun shines

And deepest hidden in the dark, cold
earth,

Are richest mines.

Low at His mercy-seat thy wounded
spirit bring,

Close to His cross, in faith and trust
still cling.

So shall thy soul have sweetest rest at
last,

No longer sigh o'er all the bitter past,
Nor longer for Lethæan waters sigh,

With passions maddened and despair-
ing cry;

But still content to do His holy will,
Bid thy wild longing cease, thy heart
be still.

N. L. K.

SCIENCE.

NEW TESTS FOR MILK.

DR. HEUSNER, of Barmen, has recently devised a simple apparatus called a lactoscope, which is based on the opacity of pure milk. It consists of two round plates of glass about the size of a watch crystal, placed parallel and held about one-eighth of an inch apart by a metal

strip, which passes between them, dividing the space between them into two sections. In the lower section is placed and secured some pure milk, or, better, some permanent white fluid of precisely the same opacity as pure milk. On one of the glass plates are some fine black lines. The upper section is filled with the milk to be tested, and secured by an elastic band. On holding the apparatus between the eye and the light, the black lines being on the side directly opposite the eye, the black lines will be seen more distinctly visible through the less opaque medium. If the milk to be tested is less opaque than the normal liquid, as shown by the lines being more distinctly visible through it, the milk has probably been watered or skimmed. Alone this little apparatus, which sells in Hamburg for dols. 1.87, is of little use, but can prove useful in connection with the lactometer, both to be followed, in doubtful cases, by a chemical analysis.

In regard to the chemical analysis of milk, which is the only reliable test of milk, Professor Lehmann, of Munich, proposes the following modification to save time: A weighed quantity, say 9 or 10 grammes of milk, is diluted with an equal weight of water, and poured out in a thin layer upon a porous plate of burnt clay, very dense and fine-grained. The water of the milk, as well as the milk sugar, albumen, and a portion of the salts dissolved in it, are absorbed by the clay plate, while the total amount of fats and casein in the milk remain on the plate in the form of a thin skin or film. This film is easily removed with a horn spatula, and then dried and weighed.

If it is desired to determine the fats alone, this film may be extracted with ether, and thus the two most important constituents of milk very quickly determined. In many cases it is sufficient to know the total weight of the principal solid constituents of the milk, hence also the amount of water, for which scarcely two hours are required. This method also possesses the advantage that a great number of samples can be tested at once without much trouble. It also does away with the use of numerous costly platinum dishes and troublesome water baths, which are always getting dry if not carefully watched.

The operation is so simple that it can be used by any person who possesses an accurate balance and set of weights.

MAGNETIC PROPERTIES OF NICKEL AND COBALT.—M. Hankel finds that with feeble currents the magnetic power of nickel is equal to that of soft iron, but with strong currents it is comparatively feeble. The magnetic power of cobalt with both strong and feeble currents is much less than that of nickel and soft iron.

WIRE FOR THE EAST RIVER BRIDGE.—Proposals were recently called for the supply of the steel wire for the suspending ropes of the East River Bridge. The specifications require 325,000 pounds of wire rope, making, 70,000 lineal feet in all. There are two sizes required, one measuring one and five-eighths in. in diam. weighing four and a half pounds to the lineal foot, and having a breaking strength of not less than 180,000 pounds; the other measuring one and three-quarters inches in diameter, weighing five pounds to the lineal foot, and having a breaking strength of 200,000 pounds. The attention of the members of the board was called to a gnarled, broken, and twisted suspender rope. This specimen was made at the factory of Roebling's Sons and Co., by the direction of Chief Engineer Roebling. It was one and five-eighths inches in diameter, and had been tested by the Keystone Bridge Company of Pittsburg. It was broken under a strain of 197,500 pounds, the required strength being 180,000 pounds.

BLUING IRON AND STEEL BY BOILING.—If iron or steel articles be boiled in the following mixture they will take a fine blue tint: Dissolve 4 ozs. hyposulphite of soda in a pint and a half of water, and then add a solution of 1 oz. acetate of lead in 1 oz. of water.



[A DREADFUL ACCUSATION.]

A WOMAN SPURNED.

CHAPTER XVIII.

And still and pale and silently
The hapless lady waits her doom.

BRENTON, with his plans completed, and ready to be acted on, came down to Selwood in good spirits.

He had telegraphed to Manvers to remain there till after his visit was made, as he had a proposal to make to him which he wished him to accept.

In these weeks some changes had taken place at Selwood.

Kirke had been compelled to return to his home; and much as he was in love with Constance Deering he did not regret the parting. He had judgment enough to see that by his absence his cause would probably gain more than if he lingered near her, reminding her by his presence of the promise she had given him.

Her manner to him was not capricious, but it was variable, and he tormented himself by trying to understand the mutations of her feelings toward him.

In spite of the certainty he had expressed as to the result, he often had horrible doubts that, after all, she would be unable to give him a favourable answer at the end of the time he had himself named.

The possibility of gaining her for his wife had but added intensity to his passion for her, and he was ready to make any self-sacrifice which would commend him to her good opinion. She had entreated him to go away and leave her to work out her problem in his absence; if she missed him—if she yearned for his presence—she would then understand that her life would be more perfect if joined with his, and she would herself recall him.

So Kirke went on his way.

Manvers remained principally in town, though

his wife could not leave Mrs. Tardy in the precarious state of her health; and the days wore on monotonously enough in the home whose cheery mistress was prostrated by her lingering illness.

Mrs. Tardy was no worse, but she was no better in spite of Dr. Morton's nostrums, and as a last resource he said that she must have change of air.

She must be taken from Selwood to some mountainous district as the only chance of her recovery.

This was why Manvers was summoned from town to the family consultation which ensued.

The old lady protested against being removed from her own home, but she was quietly and firmly overruled, and for once she submitted, but it was on conditions.

She stipulated that she should become the guest of Kirke, as she had promised him a visit, and this was probably the only opportunity she would ever have to make it.

Constance should go with her as her nurse and companion, and the professor should be their escort.

As Kirke's place was situated among the hills there could be no reasonable objection to this plan, and in silent dismay Constance found herself compelled to go in pursuit of him, or to refuse her companionship to her old friend when she most needed her.

There was a severe struggle in her mind, for she was yet uncertain as to her power to do all she had promised that day in the pantry; but she finally resigned herself to the duty before her, saying to herself:

"Kismet! It is my fate, and I will resist it no longer. If Mrs. Tardy knew she would take me all the same, for she wishes me to marry Mr. Kirke. I don't wish to marry at all, but if I am forced to give myself to any man I would choose him above all I have known. But is that enough? Oh, who knows! Who can tell? I am sure I can't."

In this state of feeling she made preparations for leaving.

Hearing that the Brentons were expected she asked leave to pay a brief visit, but Mrs. Tardy had become so dependent upon her, that she entreated her not to think of leaving her, even for a day, and Constance stayed.

With a shrinking feeling of self-accusation, mingled with some faint twinges of remorse, Emma reluctantly set out with her husband for Selwood.

At the last moment, if she had dared, she would have remained behind.

But Brenton remonstrated so vigorously against this that she found herself compelled to accompany him.

When they entered the grounds he looked around with an air of proprietorship, and said to his wife:

"Why do you look so cast down, Emma? If reports are true we shall soon be in possession of this valuable property, and then my future career as a successful man of business is assured. I shall undertake great operations in trade when the prestige of fortune is added to my own energy. With large private resources to fall back on, there need be no cowardly hesitation about the risks one takes. I think mine will end favourably for my own interests, but it is as well to be on the safe side."

"I cannot see how you are to be safe if your ventures fail, unless you settle this place on me," said Emma, in a hard tone. "The law is very unfair to women. What comes through the wife should belong exclusively to her. Except my interest in the land, I shall have no claim on anything hereafter—after—you know what."

Brenton shrugged his shoulders.

"There will be little enough to claim, I fancy, outside of the place and improvements. You forget that your aunt will strip you of every shilling of personal property that she can alienate from you. When the estate falls under my management I promise you that you shall have your fair share of the income derived from it, and spend it as you choose. I am sure that is fair enough."

"Well—yes—perhaps it is; but still the whole of it will be, or ought to be, lawfully mine. I am willing to share with you, though, so let us say no more about it. There is Agnes on the steps, and Mr. Manvers is coming down to meet us. What a magnificent creature he is, yet I believe I hate him more intensely than any living being."

"There is 'no fury like a woman scorned,'" quoted Brenton, under his breath, and luckily for him the words did not reach her ears. She was too eagerly scanning the features of the man she now hated with bitterness to pay much attention to her husband's mutterings.

A few moments later she had alighted from the carriage, and with a face wreathed in smiles was shaking hands in the most friendly manner with Manvers and his wife. She even kissed the latter effusively, and said:

"How charming you are looking, Agnes, but not so happy as I could wish. That is accounted for, though, by the state of my aunt. How is the dear old lady? Better, I hope, since you wrote to me. We came from Brighton at once on hearing of her illness. Oh, dear! what a shock it was to me to hear that my foolish ignorance about common things has caused so much suffering to her. I declare I shall never forgive myself."

Agnes quietly answered:

"Don't blame yourself too severely, Emma. Dr. Morton thinks that some lurking disease must have been in Aunt Sally's system before she breathed the tainted atmosphere, and that only hastened its development. She is better, though she does not improve so rapidly as we could desire, and she wished to see you before she sets out on a visit."

"Going away from home! Why should she do that if she is better?" exclaimed Emma, unable to conceal the dismay she felt.

She had come to Selwood expecting to find her aunt almost at her last gasp, and was met by the assurance that she was improving in health.

"I am very glad to hear that Aunt Sarah is better, but that does not tally with what you stated in your letter, Agnes. If I had not thought her in danger I should not have hurried away from the seaside. I was having a most delightful time there, I assure you."

She rattled on in this way to neutralise the impression she feared her first words had made on Agnes.

But the latter gravely replied:

"I do not think I represented Aunt Sally as in any immediate danger, Emma. She has suffered severely, and is much changed since you saw her, but we hope that the worst is over, and that change of air and scene will complete her restoration to health."

"Take me to her at once that I may judge myself of her condition," said Emma, almost hysterically. "I cannot be satisfied till I have seen her."

"She is expecting you, and she wishes you to go to her as soon as you have taken off your things."

Mrs. Brenton threw off her bonnet and loose wrapper, leaving them on a table in the hall, and followed Agnes into her aunt's room in a state of doubt and apprehension that almost unnerved her.

"Had anything been suspected or discovered?" she asked herself.

Had her aunt ceased to use the drugged wine that she was improving in health, when she ought to have been by this time hovering on the brink of the grave?

The room was darkened, and Mrs. Tardy lay on a wide chintz-covered sofa placed between two windows.

She had been dozing, and had not heard the noise of the arrival. When Agnes stood beside her and said:

"Here is Emma, aunt," she started up nervously and exclaimed:

"How you startled me, my dear. I believe I was half asleep. How do you do, Emma? Sit down there, please. Don't come nearer—I wish to have a good look at you that I may judge if

you are much happier than you were before you went away."

"But, aunt, don't you intend to let me kiss you after so long an absence? It seems strange to be received in this cool way."

"Does it? Well, you have made things hot enough for me, for I have felt for weeks past as if a burning fire was consuming my life. Agnes, dear, leave us alone together. I have something to say to Emma which she will not care to have spoken before a third person."

"Oh! as far as I am concerned you are welcome to speak before anyone," said Mrs. Brenton, defiantly. "You are going to reproach me with my carelessness about that paper. I am sure I bought the most expensive I could find, and how was I to know that such things are allowed to be sold as are injurious to health?"

Agnes left the room long before this speech was finished, and Mrs. Tardy sat up, and fixed her bright eyes on her niece as if she would read her very soul.

After a long pause, she said:

"Your assertion may be true, Emma, and I hope it is, for your own sake. It is an ugly thing to try to stop prematurely into dead people's shoes. I won't accuse you of meaning any harm to me, but I wish to know if your husband helped you to select that poisoned paper? Men are not apt to be so ignorant about such things as women."

"My husband! he indeed! Why should you suspect him of such baseness as your words imply?"

"I should not if the paper alone had been sent. Its fatal qualities might or might not have been known to you, but when drugged wine was sent at the same time, with the assurance from you that it was perfectly pure, what am I to think, Emma, but that both of you thought the old woman lived too long, and wished to put her out of the way that your inheritance might come to you?"

Mrs. Tardy's voice faltered as she went on, and when she finished speaking, tears were streaming down her face.

For a brief moment Emma was overwhelmed by this plain statement of facts. But she gathered courage from her aunt's emotion, and spoke with unflinching voice:

"This is a dreadful charge to bring against both my husband and myself, Aunt Sarah. I knew nothing of the wine sent by Mr. Brenton till after it was packed. I told you a story about it, for it was not sent to him. It was bought in Liverpool, and if there is anything wrong about it, the dealer is to blame. We thought it genuine, and I said what I did to give you confidence in it. Do you really think the wine has hurt you too? It seems incredible to me that it should have done so."

"It has nearly killed me, and it was designed to do so too. If I had continued to drink it, I should have been in my grave by this time," said Mrs. Tardy, in a broken voice. "I am glad that you knew nothing of the deadly purpose it was intended to serve."

"You have married a very bad man, Emma, and the best thing you can do for yourself is to separate from him at once. I have told no one but you what I suspect, though there are two other persons who I am sure believe as I do, that Mr. Brenton has tampered with my life."

"And they are Mr. Manvers and Agnes, of course. He warned you about the paper, and now, I suppose, he has discovered another horror in the drugged wine. Excuse me, aunt, but I cannot think of giving up my husband on such an absurd charge as this. He is very good to me, and I have faith in him, let others judge him as they may."

"It was neither Julian nor Agnes who had insight enough to foil the plan so cleverly arranged. Julian is a friend to Mr. Brenton, and believes in him simply because he has known him from his boyhood. As to Agnes, she is too much like her uncle to cherish suspicion of anyone. Of course you will still cling to this man, because 'like seeks like,' and you are kindred spirits. I have only this to say, Emma, that

you must choose between Mr. Brenton and myself."

"I have already chosen," said Emma, curtly. "But I must be enlightened on one point. Who are those very sagacious persons who have managed to throw this suspicion on my husband? I declare him innocent, and I defy them to prove him guilty."

"I have no wish to disgrace your husband by proving anything against him, Emma. I have not even breathed my own conviction of his guilt to your uncle. I do not desire to accomplish anything beyond a separation between yourself and so base a man as I believe Mr. Brenton to be. If there was not complicity between you in this shameful attempt on my life, you should shrink from him as from a viper. Emma, you are my brother's daughter, and you will not surely give me cause to believe this dreadful thing of you?"

Mrs. Tardy was still weeping, and her voice was pathetic in its pleading as she made this appeal.

Emma laughed harshly and surveyed her aunt with scornful eyes. After all, she had but a weak old woman to deal with, she thought, whose family pride would not permit her to bring an accusation against her husband. She haughtily said:

"I cannot help what you elect to believe, Aunt Sarah. I will stand up to the last in defence of my husband. You have not yet replied to my question: Who are his accusers, and by what means have they infused such suspicions into your mind? I have a right to ask this, and I insist on knowing their names."

"I shall not give them to you, so let that suffice," replied the old lady, wiping away her tears and resuming something of her old decision of manner. "Like myself, they only judged from facts, and they have never breathed a word of their suspicions to me."

"How skilful you must have grown in reading people's thoughts," said Emma, contemptuously. "May I presume to ask what were the facts referred to? I must have some idea of the ground on which this accusation is based."

"I decline to speak further on the subject," said Mrs. Tardy, coldly. "Since you will cling to that bad man I am forced to believe that you are no better than he is. I desired to see you to make this appeal to you, hoping that you would clear yourself of suspicion by shrinking from him when you were told of the baseness of which he had shown himself capable. You defend him; that is enough to show me the level on which you stand; but I am willing to save you both as far as I can."

"There is nothing to save us from," replied Emma, defiantly. "After this insulting interview, I am sure that I never wish to set my eyes on your face again."

And she flounced out of the room through one of the windows which opened to the floor of the veranda which extended along that side of the house.

A flight of steps at the end gave access to the grounds, and Mrs. Brenton, in her perturbation and anger, rushed blindly through the winding walks leading through the woodland which surrounded the house.

Baffled, accused, and dismissed in so summary a manner, all the furies seemed suddenly to make an onslaught on this unscrupulous virago, and she raved aloud in her wrath when she had gone far enough from the house to believe herself secure from being overheard.

Yet if one had listened little could have been made out from her disjointed sentences, save that an angry and violent woman was venting her spleen amid the soft beauty of the summer landscape.

In the heart of the woodland stood the pavilion which had been fitted up as a studio for Constance.

Anxious to escape a meeting with Brenton and his wife, she had retreated to this sanctum, making arrangements with Agnes to come in to her meals after the guests had retired, and she earnestly hoped that no intimation of her presence at Selwood would be given them.

She was busily engaged on a painting which

had suggested itself to her after the scene in the dining-room, though it was different in some respects.

Her imagination had gone back to the days of the Borgias, and the interior of a room in an Italian villa was represented.

A table set out with fruit, wine, and flowers stood near an open window, through which a glimpse of a lovely valley in the back-ground of sloping hills was obtained; but the interest of the picture was centred in the figures near the table.

One was a stern, implacable-looking man, wearing the scarlet robes of a cardinal, who sat in a large carved chair; the other wore the ordinary garb of a gentleman, and the third figure was that of a beautiful woman who stood looking down with pale face and frightened air at the fragment of a Venetian glass which had shattered to fragments in her hand as the poisoned draught was poured into it from the bottle still held with vice-like grasp, while the wine poured out in a crimson stream upon the shimmering silk that floated around her and stained the inlaid floor at her feet.

Absorbed in her occupation, Constance was not aware of the approach of anyone, till a voice, harsh and tuneless from angry excitement, spoke from the open door of the pavilion.

"What! you here still. You," and the last word expressed measureless contempt and indignation.

Constance started, and a little alarmed at this address in a voice she did not recognise, turned and saw who it was who had spoken to her in so insulting a manner.

She recovered her usual composure, however, and looking calmly into the excited face of the intruder, asked:

"Why not, Mrs. Brenton, when your aunt was kind enough to offer me a home, and in return allow me to be of some use to her?"

"Use? yes, I understand now the use you have made of your opportunities, viper that you are! How do you dare to face me with that innocent look, when you and your coadjutor, James Kirke, have made my aunt believe that I, that my husband, have tampered with her life? Don't deny it; denial will not avail you, for I know now that you and he were the two she referred to when she accused us."

Constance listened to her words in grave surprise.

"This is a most extraordinary and unwarranted attack, Mrs. Brenton, and one I am sure Mrs. Tardy could never have authorised you to make. I retreated to this place, hoping to avoid a meeting with you and your husband, and why you have sought me out to insult me I cannot understand."

"I did not seek you out; I stumbled on you by accident, and it is lucky for me that I did, as I learned from your presence here who had maligned me to my aunt and made her believe that I am capable of the hideous crime of which she accused me."

"You wrong me," said Constance, coldly, "for I was not even aware that Mrs. Tardy suspected the wickedness to which she so nearly fell a victim. I know that she has been slowly poisoned, but I have been very careful not to hint it to her. That you had anything to do with this terrible thing I never for one moment believed."

"Then you admit that from you came the accusation against my husband. Pray by what means did you discover ground for such a suspicion against him? Or, was it Mr. Kirke who first suggested it?"

Constance hesitated a moment, and then asked:

"Do you wish me to tell you the exact truth, Mrs. Brenton?"

"Yes—if you can speak it," was the insulting reply.

"I certainly can and will speak it, not only here but elsewhere, if called on to do so," replied Constance, proudly.

"I tasted the wine Mrs. Tardy had been drinking to improve her health, and detected the arsenic in it. It matters not how I came

to know the peculiar taste imparted to it by that fatal drug, but I did know; I also was aware that no wine-dealer had used it to improve its flavour. I took Mr. Kirke into my confidence, and to him alone have I spoken of the attempt I firmly believe to have been made upon the life of that dear old lady."

"He aided me to substitute a pure article, and she has slowly improved since then. We both tried to keep Mrs. Tardy in ignorance of what we thought would be so painful to her, but it seems that she was too shrewd for us. She has brought this charge against Mr. Brenton, and I repeat that I can and will sustain it if she requires me to do so."

"I think you are the most insolent person I ever encountered," said Emma, swelling with rage. "If this absurd charge was seriously brought forward there would be absolutely nothing to sustain it except your own assertions."

"I beg your pardon, madame. Some of the wine sent by Mr. Brenton is still in my possession. I emptied the bottles that were left, and I filled a phial from one of them, and sealed it for future use if it should be needed."

Emma became livid.

She sank down on a chair, and sat silent looking around her in a bewildered manner. Her eyes fell on the picture on the easel, and she said with scornful bitterness:

"I suppose that daub was intended to commemorate the ridiculous discovery you fancy you have made?"

"Yes—I was unlucky enough to let the glass fall into which the wine was poured, and that suggested the picture you are polite enough to stigmatise as a daub."

"I think politeness is at a discount with us," replied Emma, with curling lip. "I have only this to say to you, Miss Deering—produce your evidence if it is called for: it cannot injure Mr. Brenton, nor can you blackmail him a second time by threatening to make this story public. Doubtless that was your intention when you sealed up that phial, but I warn you that you will extort nothing more from him."

With this insulting speech she arose suddenly and swept out of the pavilion before Constance could reply.

She sat down trembling with excitement now that the scene was over, though she had borne herself so courageously while it lasted.

When she regained composure she put away her paints, which Mrs. Brenton had so contemptuously disparaged, and closing the door of the pavilion, went back to the house, managing to avoid all chance of another encounter with the enraged woman who had so coarsely attacked her.

She gained her own room, locked herself in, and only then felt safe from all chance of a meeting with Brenton and his wife.

That they would endeavour to find her she felt assured, for in spite of Emma's contemptuous allusion to the evidence of her husband's criminality, she was certain that some effort would be made to obtain possession of it.

(To be Continued)

THE full length picture of Mary Queen of Scots, reputed to have been the work of Zuccherro, and the likeness of William IV., painted and presented by Sir David Wilkie, were among the historical art treasures burnt at the fire which recently destroyed the Scottish Hospital, Crane Court, Fleet Street.

BLONDIN commenced his tight-rope exhibition 1858, since which time he has appeared in public 3,000 times, and on each occasion has traversed his rope eight times, the length being 100 metres. He has, therefore, walked 2,400,000 metres, or 2,400 kilometres—the distance between Paris and New York—without an accident.

THE Queen has presented to the town of Heywood twenty acres of land for a park. The money is out of a sum exceeding £10,000 which fell to the Queen as Duchess of Lancaster through the death, without heirs, of Mr. C. M. Newhouse.

MY FATHER.

Come, sit down here, old friend, and rest,
the evening's bright and mild;
Beneath this very chestnut have I gambolled as a child;
In yonder house my Father died,—he
planted this same tree;
Small wonder then that this dull place has
endless charms for me.

Yes! you are right, I've wander'd far, strange
lands and changes known,
And looking back, can scarce believe that
fifty years have flown.
And here I am once more, 'mid scenes I
cherished as a boy:
These tear-drops that I wipe away, are only
tears of joy.

But times have changed since I was young,
and men and women too;
Few men are like my Father now, so noble,
and so true—
Forgive me if I grow too warm in lauding
him—long gone,
But I gloried in my father, I was his
favourite son.

Around each well-loved object his presence
memory weaves,
I seem to hear his maxims in the rustling
of the leaves;
Yon' room with window now o'er-grown,
with ivy that he set,
Is hallow'd by an episode I never can
forget.

'Twas hearty, merry Christmas-time, and
after twelve months roam,
I'd joined the family circle, in this our
family home;
When oft-heard tales were told again, and
joyous hours had flown,
Relations one by one retired, and we were
left alone.

The house was strangely quiet, the fire was
smouldering dull,
Our memories troop'd before us—our hearts
were very full.
And listlessly we sat, and mused, as full
hearts often seem—
Though eyes are open wide—to rest, in
happy spell-bound dream.

Then, as the peaceful sea is moved by gentle
rippling wave,
He talked of darling mother, who was lying
in the grave;
He talked of friends of early life, whose race
on earth was run;
And then his thoughts recurred to me, his
youngest, dearest son.

I spoke of my ambitions, of my boyish
dreams of life;
I spoke of her I loved, and hoped one day
to call my wife.
I glowed with what I meant to be; he
smiled and said—"Beware,
I fear, dear boy, you're only building castles
in the air."

He smiled again, "Old Shakespeare says
that all the world's a stage,
And men but play a part thereon, from
childhood to old age.
How good! how true the adage is; the smile
how rare!
He might have said we're builders, too, of
castles in the air."

"Watch that baby in its gambols with the
mouse it's learnt to love;
Or in sleep its dimpled cheek in baby's
sunniest smilings move;
All too young to have a dream of trouble,
trial, care,
Happy in its infant visions of bright castles
in the air."

"A schoolboy next we meet him, grumbling
on from class to class.
Are the lessons never ending? will the day's
work never pass?"

Till, through clouds of Greek and Latin,
Hope, the sun, gleams brightly fair;
Hope of holidays approaching, oh! what
castles in the air.

"Older grown, and full of impulse, fairly
started in the world;
Up the hill of life advancing; oft by troubles
backward hurld;
Excelsior! his motto, password to the heights
above,
Till a wayside haven lures him—fair siesta
—man's first love.

"He thinks she'll ne'er deceive him, and
dreams oft of married bliss,
With her he loves to cheer him, with smile
and gentle kiss.
But, she leaves him for another, who is
greater,—has more gold;
And those castles he's been building crumble
into dust and mould.

"First he thinks he'll ne'er recover till the
vision's past and gone—
Like the iron blows make harder, he is roused
and hurrying on;
Far above he sees a castle, glorious beyond
compare,
Wealth and influence he longs for, sunniest
castle in the air.

"Time goes on, and he goes with it, 'till he
reaches manhood's prime.
Forty finds him well to-do, although the
hill was hard to climb.
Merchandise has yielded to him, gilded
fruits and prizes rare,
And the honour wealth commands has built
a castle in the air.

"Rich enough, yet more he covets, and his
ships are filled with stores:
Affluence they bring him, as they speed from
Eastern shores.

"Hark! a crash! those ships are sinking in
the storm-fiends' angry lair,
And his castles, time-built, worshipp'd,
tumble headlong from the air!

"Then at last, a ruined man—tottering
feebly to his grave.

"Friends of wealthier times now shun him,
and he humbly kneels to crave

"Help to guide his weary footsteps in the
way so dark and bare,

"To the castle of all castles standing firm,
though in the air."

"Falt'ringly my Father ended, and I sat
without reply;

"When he rose to say "good-night," a tear
was gleaming in his eye,

"His hand was hot and feverish, a strange
glow was on his cheek—

"But I little thought his words the last that
I should hear him speak.

When the house was hush'd in slumber—
closed in sleep each dreamer's eye,
Sounds of horror broke the silence,—piteous
moan and harrowing cry—
I was summoned to my Father; ere I could
his bedside reach,
Death in awful form had seized and robbed
him of the power of speech.

As I enter'd the old chamber, can I ere
forget the place?

His head was turned to where I stood—a
smile slept on his face—

His trembling hand he placed in mine, and
his blanch'd lips seemed to say,

"Oh! remember what I told you," then the
spirit passed away.

Standing—but a few days after—over his
fast-closing grave,

When the solemn prayers were utter'd
endless rest and peace to crave,

Looking round and seeing hundreds mourn-
ing for the loved one there,

Angels whisper'd, he had built a good man's
castle in the air.

J. H. B.

PRIDE.

I HAD a little rosebud given to me,
I dropped it as I wore it one fair
day;

I would not turn to seek it—no; for
then

'Twere plain I prized it!—so I went
my way.

I had a love that made my life a joy,
It seemed to falter one bright sum-
mer day;

I could have won it back with but a
smile;

I would not smile, and so I went
my way.

Oh pride, thou stealest our most trea-
sured things,

Things which to gain we'd risk all
else beside;

Lost, lost my rosebud, lost my love,
alas!

I might have found them but for
thee, oh pride.

WHO DID IT?

OR,

THE WARD'S SECRET.

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE darkest night does, it is said, end in the
brightest day.

So thought Mr. Leclerc, when, before the late
breakfast of continental habits, a message from
Count di Serrano was brought requesting to
have the pleasure of a few minutes interview
with him.

What could it mean but a proposal. And if
so, how completely would his fears and anxieties
banish.

No one would dare to molest him when thus
supported.

Or if such an attack were contemplated it
would be deprived of half its force and sharp-
ness.

He hastened to complete his toilette and join
his guest in the library of the vast hotel. The
count wore an unpromising air of content and
careless confidence.

He could never help being a high-bred gentle-
man, but it did certainly seem that he had but
small faith in the claims of his host to such dis-
tinction.

"I must apologise for disturbing you so early,
Mr. Leclerc," he said. "Our Italian habits are
so much earlier than your northern clime. And
in this instance I was anxious to see you before
occupied by other affairs."

Mr. Leclerc smiled blandly.

"At any hour the count was welcome, &c.,"
he pronounced.

"I thank you. Now, without delay, we can
proceed," resumed his visitor. "I observed
just now that there is a decided difference be-
tween English and continental habits. I am
going to touch on a yet more vital and essential
one," he added. "I must request you to under-
stand and pardon it."

"Of course; I am not such a tyro as not to be
aware of that fact," was the brief and
reproachful reply.

"Good—now we can proceed."

But there was still a pause of some minutes
before the count went on to say:

"Mr. Leclerc, you have gone through the
usual vicissitudes of domestic life. You have
been a lover and a husband. You are a father.
You can therefore comprehend something of
what I mean when I express my great admira-
tion for Miss Leclerc's beauty and manners, and
ask you what will be the amount of her for-
tune?"

Mr. Leclerc looked petrified.

"Her fortune, count?"

"Yes, her fortune, my good friend," repeated

the Italian. "Whatever may be English cus-
toms in such respects I surely cannot doubt that
you are aware of our habits. We arrange these
matters move calmly and sensibly than your-
selves. When there are parents of course it be-
longs to them to ask for their son. At my age
it is incumbent to discuss it for myself."

"Then you mean that your affection for my
daughter depends on her fortune?" asked Mr.
Leclerc, indignantly.

"By no means, but my indulgence of it may,"
said the count, firmly.

There was silence. Then the count began
again:

"You have all the appearance of wealth, Mr.
Leclerc. This is your only child. Of course
what you have belongs to her. Is it in land or
money? I fancy that I have heard her speak of
some lands called 'The Wilderness.' Do you
intend her to inherit it? It is my great wish to
possess some property in England. It would be
repaid by me with adequate and satisfactory
settlements."

Mr. Leclerc cleared his throat.

"Well, yes, certainly. It is my residence,
and it will go to Pauline on the completion of
the purchase. It is a very charming spot, no
doubt."

"Do I understand that it is on sale?"

"I suppose it may be called so," returned Mr.
Leclerc.

"And was it on trial that you took to it as a
residence?"

"Very much so."

"But you are fully satisfied—you are perhaps
waiting for ready cash to finish the purchase?"
observed the count. "Is there much left?"

"That is rather a leading question under the
circumstances, count. If you are here to make
an honourable proposal to my daughter you
would have a claim to comprehend all my affairs.
It is different when you merely come to decide
as to your course," he added, proudly.

"My dear sir, excuse me, I had no idea you
were so English in your notions. It is surely
tantamount to an offer that I am making. If I
find that Miss Leclerc's fortune will not justify
me in pressing it, I shall be in despair; but à
rien valoir," he added, with a shrug. "My
question is surely warranted under the circum-
stances. If my means will permit all will be
well, and 'The Wilderness' purchased for our
English residence."

Mr. Leclerc's colour came and went like that
of a girl listening to a lover, rather than a father
considering its eligibility.

"It is scarcely advisable, count. Remember
the painful associations," he said, slowly.

"My wife should scarcely regard them."

"It is but a dull neighbourhood. Pauline is
fond of variety and gaiety."

"That is again the choice of a husband in
concert with his wife. My dear sir, let me en-
treat you to make no more shuffling in the mat-
ter."

It was a very ugly and very English word,
and it brought the angry flush to its hearer's
brow.

"To speak plainly, count, I have only invested
a few thousands in the estate. There will be at
least as much again to be found," he answered,
hesitatingly.

"You have the refusal of it."

"No one can touch it during my tenure
and my pleasure," answered Mr. Leclerc, more
quietly.

Count di Serrano smiled significantly.

"Yes, I understand. An advance that has to
be repaid ere the land can be freed. It is well
done, and makes all straightforward. Then,
always supposing that I obtain the young lady's
free consent it will be easy and straightforward.
And the money will be waiting to complete the
contract," returned the count.

"My Pauline is an obedient child. I shall
need only to inform her of my wishes," said the
father, proudly.

"Doubtless; but I do not wish her to be in
any way constrained. I should rather be sure
from her own lips that she is perfectly free and
willing to be my wife. And that must be the
case ere I can complete the contract."

"Count, that can't be till all else is settled. I can't have my child's feelings trifled with," said Mr. Leclerc, hastily. "If you are in earnest you shall have the opportunity you seek—not otherwise."

The count laughed cynically.

"We are faring admirably, Mr. Leclerc. One would think that we each of us had some secret that clogged our actions," he added, sarcastically.

Lord Chatham with his sword drawn
stood waiting for Sir Richard Strachan,
Sir Richard, longing to be at 'em,
stood waiting for the Earl of Chatham.

So says your proverb. But we shall never get on at that rate, so I will take the plainer tone. If you have the estate of The Wilderness at your command, with only a few thousands to complete the purchase, I am ready to advance the money on due proof of the same as Miss Leclerc's marriage settlement. That is a frank and handsome offer from which I will not draw back," he added, firmly.

Mr. Leclerc ought not to have needed time or consideration to answer such a proposition.

Why did his restless attitude and moving features betray the workings of his spirit?

"Count, I really am not prepared to go into figures at such rapid notice," he replied. "I am much flattered by your offer, and possibly willing to entertain it on any reasonable terms," he went on. "And I am sure my daughter will be content to obey my wishes where you are concerned—but—"

"But you are not prepared for business. That is perhaps an English weakness. We here are generally tolerably aware of the state of our affairs, and ready to meet a suitor for a daughter if of marriageable years. But all that is different in your country. Lands are held on very peculiar tenure, I say, in some cases. It is unfortunate that I have so set my mind on the estate in question that it is a sine qua non with me. However, if I give you a few days to consider it may be all arranged, I daresay. I will give you a little time, say a week, to consider, and in the meantime you will perhaps allow me to speak to Miss Leclerc on the subject. My dear sir, I cannot ask all and gain nothing," he went on, seeing his host hesitated. "Kindly indulge me in this and allow me to see Miss Leclerc now, and I will not trouble you nor her till the seven days named."

Mr. Leclerc rang the bell without a word.

"Request Miss Leclerc to come here for a few moments, if breakfast is not quite ready," he said to the domestic.

It was the second time he had been forced to give such an order against his will. Would the result be as disastrous and yet so successful to his plans?

Pauline soon appeared. Lovely indeed she looked in all the freshness of her morning toilette.

As well preserved and high bred as was the count, he was assuredly more fitted for the father than the husband of that fair and youthful girl.

But that was the least of her father's considerations now.

"Pauline, my love, the count has something to say to you. It is for you to reply according to your judgment and wishes," he said, significantly.

"And alone and unbiased, if you please, Mr. Leclerc. This is perhaps an unusual proceeding, but the whole affair is unusual, and I must request such confidence in my age and character."

The father was fain to submit to one who indeed did seem born rather to command than to be thwarted in any expressed wish. He left the room with a—

"Only for a few minutes, count; that must be the limit of my compliance."

Pauline had sank in a chair with a bewitching agitation in her whole manner and look.

She was, in truth, no dissembler at the moment.

She must have been more or less than woman

to meet the expected scene unmoved when such sad recollections of the past necessarily mingled with the future.

But the count's first words were calculated to reassure her.

"Miss Leclerc, I am not going to be so absurd as to play the part of a lover to one so young as yourself. All I want to know is whether you will be content and faithful as my wife, should your father and myself come to terms on the contract?"

Pauline raised her head reproachfully.

"Then you have not obtained my father's consent, do I understand, count?" she said, proudly.

He smiled with more satisfaction than alarm at the question.

"Not altogether as to the conditions that I think essential, Miss Leclerc; but what I wish to say to you is simply that I will retire from the field altogether should it be your wish. If you cannot be happy as Countess di Serrano I will never ask it of your father."

She looked down reflectively.

There were many considerations weighing in her mind, some on her heart, ere she could reply.

Was it safe to decline such an offer and all that it entailed?

The count was a fascinating man with his semi-Italian semi-English air, and as a countess with all that he could give, surely life was by no means despicable to a beautiful and brilliant bride elect.

"If my father approves, and you are really true in your wishes, count, it will not be refused by me, nor should I wish to disobey you both," she said, simply.

It was a girlish, submissive reply.

Was it such as such a man desired?

"Pauline, you have suffered, as I know. Have you forgotten your first love?" he asked.

She blushed, a hot, vermillion tint that seemed to reproach the questioner.

"It is cruel to ask. To what avail would it be if I were to give myself up to regrets; and perhaps for one who was not altogether true to me," she said, plaintively.

"And perhaps you can trust better the steady affections of a mature man like me, and prefer such a life to a nun's constant mourning," he returned. "It is very nice, no doubt, and obedient, and most flattering to myself. I doubt that your friend would be as sensible and self-controlled. Then I may venture to trust in your free and willing consent; of course I do not even dream of love in the matter."

Pauline softly uttered an assent.

The count raised her hand to his lips, but he did not touch it.

"So be it then, Pauline. I do believe and trust your words," he said, "though I may wonder at them. Poor girl, you are indeed worthy of pity, for I fear you have been sinned against by more than one, and for the sake of those whom you little suspect. But I, at least, will not do you wilful wrong, if I cannot make your happiness."

He drew back as he spoke, and Pauline hurriedly withdrew.

She felt daunted by his whole manner and words, and yet there was perhaps a degree of comfort in the assurance he had given her.

But the girlish visions were strangely dispelled, and the memories of the past revived by that brief interview.

She retired to her room for a brief interval before she could seek Viola and her father.

It was impossible for her to confide in her friend that strange proposal and yet more perplexing warning.

It was no triumphant success such as she had gaily predicted, but a sobering and mysterious shadowing of unseen currents and disquieting warnings that she had received from her noble suitor.

CHAPTER XXX.

SIR ALDEBRANDE LEIGHTON was a crushed and subdued man since the disappearance of his

nephew, and the attendant disgrace that had fallen upon his name and kindred.

There perhaps could scarcely be a physical change, for the baronet had ever been considered as a complete valetudinarian, and utterly unfit to discharge the duties of his station.

But yet there was something all different in the temper and mien of the invalid that could not be mistaken even by the inexperience of his own domestics.

The proud, imperious tone that had been so habitual to him had subsided into a sad indifference to all surrounding objects.

Details that he had previously superintended were now utterly disregarded by him.

And though the newspapers were keenly scanned, and even the hearsay reports of the neighbourhood were listened to with a condescending patience all foreign to his nature, he yet turned in disgust from the books that had formerly been his chief interest.

And if letters were welcomed with more than common eagerness they were in the majority of cases impatiently torn up or thrown aside as the vehicles of annoying disappointment.

Thus passed several weeks at Leighton Court with no actual result as to its master or the missing heir.

For heir Neville Grantley had ever been considered in the household, whatever more experienced persons might know would be the inevitable concomitants of the young man's doubtful birth.

But when six or more of these weary intervals had elapsed there came a change.

A letter bearing a foreign postmark arrived, and the personal attendant of Sir Aldebrande noted the excitement it produced so narrowly that he watched carefully for the arrival of others in the same handwriting and postmark. Nor was he altogether disappointed.

More than one of the epistles found their way to the "Court."

Marston fancied that an answer must have been sent without his knowledge, and took umbrage accordingly.

And when at last a stranger presented himself at the gates of the hall and demanded speech of Sir Aldebrande the wrathful pique of the valet knew no bounds.

"He would know the reason why he should be so insulted after fifteen years in his master's service," was the mental if not loudly expressed idea of the trusted servant.

There might be some claim of justice in the plaint.

In any case it was unknown or disregarded by the master of the mansion.

He had other things to trouble him at that moment, and it might be that the possibility of such minor results did not even occur to him as imperilling his comfort.

"Show him in," was his order, when the stranger was announced.

And in a minute or more the visitor was in the room, the door closed behind him, and the two tenants of the apartment face to face.

Sir Aldebrande regarded his guest jealously.

"You tell me that you have important matters to speak of. You have given me some pledge that the assertion is not altogether devoid of truth," he began. "I am an invalid. I would fain know with as little delay as possible what you have to say and what it has to bear on my present sorrow and anxiety," he added, hurriedly.

The visitor was a dark featured, bearded man, with so much hair and so many wraps that it would have been difficult to at all recognise his identity had he been disposed to shrink from recognition.

But such did not appear to be the case with him.

He sat down fairly opposite to the baronet and did not in the least attempt to shrink from his earnest gaze.

"You are right, Sir Aldebrande. I have come a long distance to give you some information that should be of deep import to you. You remember Roy Devaux—you loved his sister. Am I not correct in this statement?"

"Yes, yes, but to what avail renew those torturing memories?" said Sir Aldebrande, impatiently.

"Simply to prepare you for what is to come, my good sir. The love you had for Miss Viola Devaux was as deep or deeper than Neville Grantley's attachment for her niece. Both, as I understand, led to murder and to the natural results."

Sir Aldebrande was white with agitation.

"It was always understood that Mr. Roy Devaux disappeared most strangely and suddenly, and some suspected that there had been foul play," he said; "but I never heard it openly asserted."

"No, because there was no one to sift it out as in the case of this unlucky Reginald Waldegrave," was the reply. "Still, many imagined, and a very, very few knew the truth, and you were among these last, Sir Aldebrande, if I do not mistake," he added, in a low and significant tone.

There was silence for a brief moment. Then the baronet summoned courage to reply:

"If you can show me any reason or right that you have to enter on such painful and private matters I may perhaps be more frank with you," he said, hoarsely.

"Very well, then, I will do my best to satisfy you," said the stranger; "I will tell you a tale:

"Many years ago there was a high-born man who loved a beautiful girl, who was, in a manner, without the usual chaperones of her age and sex. And her brothers were criminally—yes, criminally neglectful of her, though she was dear as the heart's core to one, if not to both of the brothers. The girl fell a prey to her lover. He, for some unexplained cause, did not marry or love her openly. There was the natural result of such a state of things. There was ruin, disgrace, and murder, and worse," he went on, hoarsely.

Sir Aldebrande's head was bowed.

"This is very sad, but I do not care to listen to such tragic tales. I have enough of my own sorrows," he said, constrainedly.

The visitor laughed scornfully.

"Tragic tales, others," he said, bitterly. "Dare you say this, and deliberately, and with the terrible punishment on your head? Man, man, will nothing avail as a lesson? Aldebrande Leighton, thou art the man, as said the prophet of old."

"And who are you, insolent villain?" was the indignant response, albeit it was given in a somewhat faint and doubting tone.

"I am, or rather was, the most intimate friend of Roy Devaux. It has been my business to try and ascertain the truth of his fate. As to her, poor ignored one, there is less possibility of knowing what became of her. Some said that she was murdered also, but whether by her exasperated brother or false lover, who shall say? Better had no vestige remained of that wicked and disastrous episode," he went on in a tone of hard and exceeding bitterness.

"Nay," said Sir Aldebrande, suddenly, "it was not so. It was——" and then he stopped ere the next words could find vent.

"I am glad you know something of it, Sir Aldebrande," said the guest; "but I think that you surely make some error as to what you say. Do you mean that there was no child—or that it was not to be regretted that there was no child; or can it be that the offspring of Viola Devaux would have been regarded as his father's lawful son, had he lived?"

"Man—man, you torture me. Why speak in these dark, gloomy ways, when your meaning is so obvious? You know that Viola Devaux left no lawful issue, if you know aught of the matter. Were I to give my whole fortune it could not be altered now."

"Then she had a child before her evil fate—before the revengeful hand was laid upon her, poor helpless one?" returned the guest.

Sir Aldebrande literally groaned.

He gave no other sign of hearing the question.

Perhaps it was the most wise and effectual, for it did in some manner soften the fiery torrent of reproach.

"And that son is, or was living to meet a fate as disastrous as his mother's?" he resumed, in a milder tone.

Still no reply.

"Aldebrande Leighton, I demand, I adjure you to reply to me, if you would win as a pitying assistant one who otherwise would be your deadliest foe," returned the stranger, earnestly.

"What would you have?"

"An answer to my plain words. Was Neville Grantley the son of Viola Devaux?" said the guest.

"If I said so, what then? To what avail—to blast her fame long years after she has been in the tomb?" replied the baronet.

"The name was ruined, it matters far less what may be the fame, years and years after the family have vanished from the spot. All but one, and she, poor girl, is also in the grasp of her foes, and bereft of her lover."

"It was no fault of mine—I warned him at once not to allow himself to be won by a Devaux. I bade him avoid her as if she were a rattlesnake. I told him my whole favour hung on the obedience to my commands," exclaimed Sir Aldebrande, vehemently. "I am not to be blamed for his perversity of will."

"Say rather for a fate that brought such retribution in its train," replied the guest. "But all this is useless. I have given you already proof that I know enough to be trusted with more. And if there is any hope of retrieving the past it must be in this country. Do you confess that Neville Grantley is the son of Viola Devaux and yourself?"

Sir Aldebrande shivered—yes, there was no doubt that a thrill did run through his whole frame.

"Will you not confess that much?" repeated the man. "If not, there will be more blood—more crimes on your head."

"Yes—yes, but why should I—why must I confess what had best be a secret from all? The poor boy has obloquy enough on his name, without that stain to deepen it. If he is dead let him only be known as Neville Grantley—the son of an obscure unknown."

"And spare the noble name of Leighton. Is that it?" sneered the guest. "Ah, thus it is. I ride and selfishness ever. There is no truth in you, Aldebrande Leighton, and the curse shall still rest on you."

"No—no, as Heaven is my witness, I would risk all—all, give all my fortune if I could but prove that he was my lawful son. Yes, I would weep over him—over him; defend him—avenge him if that was possible. But alas—alas, it is too late—too late. And the miserable past had best be buried in the grave, and that which will soon open for me."

There was no mistaking the sincerity of that contrite, broken-hearted man.

The affection too was verified beyond doubt by the haggard features, so prematurely old, and the wasted form of the master of Wilmer, who had apparently all that the world could give of wealth and happiness.

The stranger seemed tacitly to acknowledge this testimony, and to soften in his bitterness of spirit.

"Where is her grave?" he asked, as if in continuation of the thoughts spoken by his host.

"Alas, I know not. She was snatched from me by her revengeful brother, and it was only by a chance that she ever regained the custody of her child. I know not her fate, save that she died, and left him an orphan—doubly an orphan. Ah, if he were but openly, legally mine, what joy I might now feel, instead of this deep remorse and grief," he groaned.

The stranger was silent for some moments, then he rose to depart.

"Sir Aldebrande, I have brought you no good tidings to comfort you, and you have but confirmed that which I previously guessed. Neville Grantley is doubtless better dead than alive under the stain and the danger that rest on his name. However, it is well to know that he is loved and mourned by his father. I never thought I could believe you more, Aldebrande Leighton, but time and grief have partly done

their work. You are changed, perhaps, since the days when Roy and Viola Devaux were your friends and companions. I will bid you farewell, now."

"Man, who art thou that knows so much, and yet use that information to torment and crush me?" exclaimed Sir Aldebrande, his emotion apparently giving him strength that had been fast failing under his afflictions.

"I am Roy Devaux's true and bosom friend, but not known to you, Sir Aldebrande, as such. As to my purpose in coming it was partly to ascertain the truth of my impressions. And I will give you this small grain of comfort, that should it be possible to do anything to discover Neville Grantley's fate or vindicate his innocence and memory, what you have told me will be an incentive to the attempt."

And without another word, and carefully avoiding the touch of the outstretched hand of his host, the stranger left the room, and Sir Aldebrande could hear his step rapidly descending the stairs ere he had time to ring the hand-bell that stood beside him on the table.

(To be Continued.)

THE STAFFORDSHIRE POTTERIES.

THE trade year in the Staffordshire potteries has exhibited in some departments an improvement upon the previous year, although it has suffered very greatly from the general depression, and at the present time on the average manufactories are only working four days a week.

Of the exports of china and earthenware fully a third of the goods find their way to the United States, and there has been a substantial improvement in the trade with that country during the last few months.

The same remark applies to Brazil. But with the remainder of South America and with British North America there has been a decline of business. In the early months of the year the trade with Australia was exceedingly slack, but latterly there has been an improvement, though an alteration of tariff which has recently been made in Australia must inevitably prove almost prohibitive to the china and earthenware trade with England.

An increased amount of business has been done with France and Holland, but the trade with Germany and other continental nations has fallen off to a considerable extent. During the past few weeks there has been an increase of orders for goods for the home market.

The value of the exports of china and earthenware for the nine months ending September 30 was £1,228,777, as compared with £1,270,606 for the corresponding nine months of 1876, and £1,298,029 in 1875.

A SLIGHT change is to be made in the uniform of the infantry regiments. At present it is the rule to form the collar of the tunic of coloured cloth corresponding with the facings, but it is now intended to have only a coloured patch on each side of the collar, coming down to the points in front.

POOR LOO.

By the Author of "Dan's Treasure," "Clytie Cranbourne," "The Golden Bowl," etc.

CHAPTER LVIII.

"YES, I HEAR HER. I AM COMING."

Our very hopes bulied our fears,
Our fears our hopes bulied;
We thought her dying while she slept,
And sleeping when she died.

BUT one more scene at Little Bampton, and that is a sad one.

For some time after she had been left alone with her lover, Lizzie slept, while his arm was

clasped round her and her head pillowed on his shoulder.

Very faint and low was her breathing, and more than once he thought the spirit had fled and that he but held the lifeless shell of the woman he loved.

Suddenly she opened her eyes with a strange light in them.

The end was at hand.

"Kiss me, Donald," she said, eagerly. "You are coming soon. The Lord hath given me my heart's desire. Tell—"

But her voice failed her. His lips met hers, and when they parted there was but life in those of one of them.

That night Donald Duncan was raving in the delirium of brain-fever, and from the first the doctors looked grave, and entertained but faint hopes of his recovery.

The anxiety he had suffered when he learnt that Lizzie had run away from the Abbey, his untiring search for her, and the neglect with which he treated all matters of food and comfort during that time, had made an impression upon his health.

And when to this was added the night spent in that frightful storm, and his own mad plunge into the sea and rescue of the woman he loved from a watery grave, there had been cause enough given for the loss of the strongest life.

Had Lizzie survived, he might have rallied with her, for hope is a more powerful medicine than physician ever yet discovered.

But she had gone before him, had told him he would soon follow, and when he was found faint and senseless, with her dead body in his arms, it was discovered that the injuries he had received at the hands of the sea and rocks had been such that they ought to have been attended to immediately.

So precarious did his tenure of life appear that his father was telegraphed for immediately, and on his arrival Major Grant received him, and in his own blunt way tried to explain the situation.

"I hope you think I acted well and for the best?" he concluded.

But the old Scotch earl snapped at him, saying:

"Hoot, man! Better my lad had married a full blooded negress than been made food for tha' worms; and this lass as I've heerd' war a pure laddie and one o' the bonniest a' tha' country side. Never show thy face at Glen Moira if the lad dies."

And the old man went into the presence of his son while the major, a sadder if not a wiser man, lagged behind.

This was what his well-meant efforts to save the family from a plebeian connection had brought him; so he mused, thinking himself unjustly dealt with.

Yet his interference had not been fortunate, and he reluctantly admitted to himself that if his next visit to Glen Moira depended upon his nephew living, he had seen the last of it, for he was not the next heir, and the whole clan would resent his conduct.

He gained no comfort; when the earl came out of the sick-room from his pale, grief-stricken face there was no hope written upon it, and he scarcely spoke to his kinsman; Lady Elizabeth and the rest of the party had left the melancholy place, but here Major Grant remained, his duty detained him, and pleasant or not he was not a man to shirk it.

It came at last on the ninth day, and the sick man, wasted now to little more than skin and bone, opened his eyes upon the world with the light of reason shining in them.

"Father! uncle!" he said as he saw the two male watchers by his side, and he looked round the room for a second as though expecting to see another form, but there was only the hired nurse. Then memory came back like a relentless flood and his last chance of life was gone.

"Father!" he repeated, but even the tone of his voice had changed, "will you promise me one thing?"

"What is it, my son?"

"You will promise me?"

"Ay, if my earldom hang thereby."

"It won't," with a smile; "it is that you bury me with Lizzie or Lizzie with me, I don't care which."

"Hoot, lad, there be Lizzies enough in the world, and there be thy own cousin Lizzie a' crying her e'en out for you."

But the young man shook his head.

"Your promise," he said. "There was but one Lizzie for me. She is gone; I am going to her. 'Twill make no difference in our reunion, still I wish it; she is to be buried by my side as my wife."

"As thou wilt, lad, I promise thee, but thou'll get well and strong yet, the verra birds are waiting for you to shoot them at Glen Moira."

But the young man smiled sadly. Glen Moira would never see him again, and the birds might fly about at pleasure without fear of his gun.

He gave a hand each to his father and uncle; the former in love, the latter as a sign of forgiveness. Then he closed his eyes and slept.

And thus he remained for many hours. The fever had left him.

With sufficient motive or impetus or vitality he might have drifted back to the shores of life.

But there were no strong breezes to drive his little barque, no great prize to incite him to strive for the haven, nay, his desires, if he had any, were rather against reaching an earthly shore; in the struggle and fight for life what had he to gain who had lost his only treasure?

Thus the time went on; he was growing weaker and weaker; no human science or skill could avail him.

Only the presence of the one loved woman could by her magnetic presence have brought him back to life, and she was beckoning him with outstretched hands from the opposite shore.

To Major Grant, who sat and listened to his nephew's disjointed murmurs, the memory of a verse, the author's name of which he had quite forgotten, occurred, and he repeated the verse half aloud.

Over the river they beckon to me,
Loved ones who've gone to the farther side;
The gleam of their snowy robes I see,
Though their voices are lost in the dashing tide.

There was one with tresses of brown and gold,
And eyes of dark and wondrous hue;
She passed with that boatman chill and cold,
And the thick mists hid her from mortal view.

But before he could proceed any further Donald had half risen in his bed in a position as though he were listening; then he said in a tone of deep contentment:

"Yes, I hear her. I am coming, coming!"

And he sank back and closed his eyes, and breathed gently for a time.

But the pulsations of the heart grew fewer and weaker, and though his father, who came in, would have poured some stimulant down his throat, the physician standing by restrained him.

"Let him die in peace, as a good man should," he said, in a low tone to the earl.

And the latter acquiesced mutely.

Thus the end came; so imperceptibly that they never quite knew when he went.

But from the time of his saying he was "coming" he never opened his eyes or spoke again.

Thus Lizzie and Donald in the hey-day of youth paid their debt to nature, and as this, in the experience of so many human beings happens it seems as though Longfellow had written a satire rather than a truism when he says:

The young may die; the old must.

Is it not the experience of most of us that the young die constantly around us?

CHAPTER LIX.

"FIRST OF ALL SHE IS TOO YOUNG TO BE MARRIED."

Misses! The tale that I relate
This lesson seems to carry,
Choose, not alone a proper mate,
But proper time to marry.

COWPER.

THREE months have elapsed since the events

recorded in my last chapter, and Mabel Travers and Loo are living in their old house at Notting Hill Gate.

The latter is in deep mourning, not for Constance or Herbert Dorset, but for the girl who from her infancy had filled the place in the world which Loo was born to fill, and who in death had been a like substitute.

Loo is changed.

She looks older, as though years instead of months had passed over her head since that day when Lady Travers had accused her of stealing the diamond brooch.

Very lovely as her countenance is, and under all circumstances will be, there is an expression of firmness and decision about the mouth and brows which one would never have noticed before.

And, indeed, the girl had had a hard time of it, for the struggle was not yet over.

The discovery of her parentage and true position in the world had been by no means an unalloyed blessing to Poor Loo.

On her identity being proved beyond dispute Lady Elizabeth had graciously informed her that her proper home was Drayton Abbey, and invited her to come there at once.

But Loo, though more pliant in one sense, was also more determined in her way than Lizzie could have been, and very firmly, though courteously while thanking her aunt for her kindness, she expressed her intention of remaining with the lady who had been to her "more than a mother."

The reply cut Lady Elizabeth keenly; once it would have provoked a sharp retort, but the haughty mistress of Drayton Abbey had been greatly humbled of late, and the consciousness that her training of poor Lizzie had not been quite a success, made her hesitate to force any other girl to come and reside with her.

A harder trial remained for Loo when her father came to claim her, and she broke down in sobs of grief and agony and clung to Mabel, begging her not to send her away, as a drowning man might cling to a plank upon which his very life depended.

And Mabel, little less moved than the girl herself, wept over and tried to soothe her, assuring her that her home was always open to her, and in her heart she cherished no one as she did "her child."

Rather trying for Major Fitz-Howard Hill, who stood looking on, and who began to feel himself something of an ogre, though he could not distinctly state what he had done to deserve the character. Then he blunderingly asked:

"What can I do? I don't want to make either of you miserable; but I cannot leave my daughter," with a bow to Mabel, "a burden any longer upon you; it is not as though I can offer you any compensation."

"Indeed you can," said Mabel, quickly, "if you want to repay me for my care of your child during the years I believed her fatherless, leave her with me now. Come to this house to see her as often as you like; use it as your own, but leave Loo with me. If you think I deserve any consideration for the past, give me this as my reward. Loo has been more than daughter and sister to me, surely you cannot be hard-hearted enough to take her away now and leave me desolate."

Mabel Travers is a handsome woman still; quite as young as Lady Alice would have been had she lived, and as she pleads now for what is so clearly her right, Major Fitz-Howard Hill feels that he is beaten, and that, though he has found his child, she really and truly does not belong to him.

He is not a small or mean-minded man, however, and he has no paltry jealousy about the affection of his child, so he acquiesces as graciously as he can, kisses Loo tenderly for the sake of his dead wife, takes Mabel Travers' hand in his own and thanks her for her kindness to his motherless child, and thus soothes both of the women, and at last he takes his leave; his daughter remains behind, and he feels



[OPPOSING CLAIMS.]

puzzled as to what the result of all this is to be.

A week or two slips on.

Major Hill looks in as often as he chooses—three or four times a week, and then another difficulty presents itself in the form of a suitor for his daughter.

It is very provoking that people cannot remain quiet and satisfied.

"What do people want to get married for?" he asks himself, severely. "And such a fellow, too!"

But he cannot say this, though he may think it.

Robert Marker found his child in the streets bleeding and crushed, took care of her, found friends for her, had watched over her, though sometimes at a distance, ever since, and though his claims as a suitor might not be worth consideration, upon other grounds he could not be ignored.

All of which was embarrassing enough for the major, but it was not all that he had to encounter.

In addition to these things, a sentiment such as he had never felt for any woman since his wife died came over him for Mabel Travers.

Of course he was not in love!

Had such an idea been suggested to him his indignation would have been great.

And yet—

He never spent such happy hours anywhere as he did at that house at Notting Hill Gate, and Loo was certainly not the principal element in that enjoyment.

Indeed, she often helped to damp it by showing so much pleasure in the company of the surgeon.

But still he went on day after day, and uttered no word of definite prohibition to his daughter's lover.

"I wonder if she would have me," he mused one day, thinking of Mabel Travers. "It would be an easy solution of the matter, and Loo would belong to both of us if it were not for that confounded surgeon."

The individual thus anathematised here made his appearance with a request for a few minutes private conversation, and Major Hill, though he assented, felt as though he would rather have faced a vindictive enemy than listen to this man, only to refuse his request.

Never had Robert Marker felt so nervous, but it had to be done.

He was not going to give up Loo out of any dread of bearding her father, though he felt he might now be regarded as a fortune hunter or as one seeking a recompense for what he had done for a helpless child.

He had told Loo this, but she had soothed and re-assured him and had declared that if her father did not consent she would wait until she was of age and then marry him, or, if her sense of filial duty would not lead her quite to this point she could promise him that she would never marry anyone else.

Thus primed for the interview, his fine face flushed, his dark grey eyes with an excited lustre in them and a certain nervousness in his voice which he tried hard to conceal, Robert Marker began his story.

It was very simple and straightforward. He had loved Loo as a child, after years of absence he had met her again, and, though he found his affection had ripened into a warmer feeling, he might not, on account of her youth, have spoken when he did had she not seemed to want a protector.

He had spoken to her however before he knew she had any relative whose permission should be asked; Miss Travers, her only guardian at the time, had approved of his doing so; now Loo had authorised him to say that her happiness as well as his own depended upon the major's consent.

All of which was painful to a man naturally averse to doing anything discourteous or unkind, but Major Fitz-Howard Hill had a duty to perform, or so he thought, and he replied as kindly but firmly as he could, that while he fully appreciated Mr. Marker's good feelings and the

honourable manner in which he had behaved, he yet felt that he must in duty to his child deny his request.

"First of all she is too young to be married," said the major, warming with his subject; "then, the difference in age between you is great, and beyond that the position that Loo, as you will still call her, must take in her mother's right makes your request one which I cannot accede to. Believe me, Mr. Marker, I have the greatest possible esteem for you. I am quite conscious of the heavy debt of gratitude I owe you, but I cannot give you my daughter."

Robert Marker bowed his head; what could he urge against the hard facts which Loo's father had spoken of.

She would be an heiress; suitors noble and rich would come and claim her; though none could love and cherish her more tenderly than he would have done.

So he left her father's presence, thinking bitterly, perhaps, how lightly the prize now denied him had been treasured when he found it ragged, dirty, crushed and bleeding not so very many years ago, and now she was beyond his reach, a treasure to be reserved for some man upon whom fortune had already liberally showered her favours.

In this frame of mind he came into the presence of Loo and Mabel, and his sad face and dejected manner told his story before he uttered a word.

Loo, when she heard the decision, burst into tears, but Mabel, the ever kind and ready comforter, soothed the girl and gave her hand in token of re-assurance to the surgeon, as she said:

"Don't be disheartened; we have had greater difficulties than these to surmount, but you must have patience and faith; we cannot expect to get everything at once; but we shall succeed."

Anxious to be convinced the two lovers listened to her, and tried to believe that the cloud which hung over them possessed a bright and silver lining.

(To be Continued.)



[LOVE'S SACRIFICE.]

THE LOVE PACT.

CHAPTER XXI.

For Love himself took part against himself
To warn us off, and Duty loved of Love—
Oh, this world-curse, beloved but hated—came
Like death betwixt thy dear embrace and mine,
And crying, "Who is this? Behold thy bride!"
She pushed me from thee. TENNISON.

MRS. WILMER'S astonishment as she witnessed the passionate caresses which Hugh Mostyn showered on his newly-found love was extreme. She had not however forgotten the tale which Eugénie had related to her on the first day of the acquaintanceship, and readily divined that the captain must be the supposed recreant lover.

For the rest the old lady was kind-hearted as prudent. She knew that a solitary interview, vexed by no prying eyes, must be the thing most desired by the re-united pair, and she judiciously threw open the heavy door which gave entrance to the kitchen, touching Hugh Mostyn's arm lightly to indicate this retreat, while she herself returned to her son's side.

Thankful to the old dame for her thoughtfulness, the captain, his arm around Eugénie's waist, and her head nestling against his broad breast, led his charge into the spacious, old-fashioned room, with its black-oak ceiling beams, quaintly stencilled walls, broad hearth and ample chimney-corner, where still remained the massy fire-dogs on which in days of yore huge logs had burned away.

Not by any means a comfortable refuge either, for a gigantic coal fire roared under the spacious chimney and bade defiance to whatever keen currents of air might find their way through ill-fitting door or casement.

It is impossible to describe adequately the lovers' interview: the shy reserve of the girls as she recalled, after the first transports of meeting, the neglect which had wrung her heart and brought her to the brink of the world of shadows;

the full explanations of Hugh and his ardent protestations of undying remembrance; the soft pity of the womanly heart at what he had suffered—all ending in a fervent renewal of the olden troth-plight, once sealed, with clasped hands and meeting lips, beneath the laden orchard trees of the old Norman home.

"Providence has been very good to me," said Hugh Mostyn as his mind reverted to the heavy gloom which had of late overshadowed him. "I thought the world held no more sunshine or happiness for me. But now, now that I have regained thee, my beloved, my bliss and peace seem too great for belief, too infinite to be the lot of a mortal."

"But, Hugh," whispered Eugénie, timidly, "may we meet any more?"

"May we meet? What a question is that, Eugénie! What else should we do?"

"Ah, my Hugh; but what of the bride whom thy father had chosen for thee?"

The question came home to Captain Mostyn with startling force and recalled him abruptly from his lover's Paradise to the things of earth.

He remembered that during the last weeks of despair and indifference he had permitted preparations for the completion of the old pact between Lord Thanet and the Marquis D'Aubricion to go on. What indeed did it signify to him whether that union were entered into or not?

Now how changed was the situation and the young man's desires and hopes! How terribly strong too were the fetters that bound him! Hard as it would have been to free himself when he first returned to England, the task was immeasurably more difficult now. Each link of the chain had strengthened by his inaction. What hope was there that Lord Thanet would consent to stultify himself by the breach of a compact now on the eve of fulfilment? What indeed! Hugh Mostyn recalled his father's stern and strict adherence to his spoken word under all circumstances with a terrible sinking of heart.

As these thoughts glided through his mind he

turned his troubled gaze to the girl's soft, sweet face and met the glance of her liquid brown orbs fixed trustfully on his own.

"No. I will never forsake her," he thought "She is mine!—now and for evermore!"

"Hugh!" said Eugénie, again, caressing his hand with her small, tapering fingers, "you have not answered my question. I would know whether thou art still the affianced of the French lady."

"I am," replied the captain, in a low, choked voice.

The girl withdrew herself from his encircling arm, and the bright look which had overspread her face died out like the last fading flush of sunset when grey twilight closes on the evening sky.

"I have been very weak and foolish, Hugh," she said, presently, in a tremulous voice to which she vainly strove to impart firmness. "I was but a silly village maiden when you wooed me in la belle Normandie. I knew little of disparities of rank and the iron chains of wordly rules and maxima. In our old country legendary ballads I had heard of knights—nay, even kings—who had loved humble maidens and had raised them to their degree and state. Some of those old-world tales you too knew and told them to me, with the added charm they took from a beloved voice, as we walked beneath the shadowing lime-trees which grew by the village church. I thought it would be even so with us. You assured me oftentimes that your father would relent. Is it not so?"

"It is—but, Eugénie—"

"Listen, Hugh. That assurance was ever present in my heart when I left my own land to seek thee in thine. Had it not been so think you that I should have left my home on a quest so unmasidenly? No! For then I should have well deserved that the village girls, my companions in happier days, should have made my name a byword and a mockery!"

Again Captain Mostyn endeavoured to reply and again the girl stayed him by a gesture.

"You have your pride of birth and race, Hugh,

but we others have also ours. To us an unsullied name is equally dear. In the first joy of meeting thee I had forgotten all else. I am now recalled to a calmer mind and see things as they are. Thou hast not obtained thy freedom, therefore each loving word breathed in my ears is the right of another—each kiss pressed on my brow is one to which thy affianced bride alone has lawful right. It was not well of thee, Hugh, to cause me—a weak, loving girl—to forget this. Heaven knows I did the lady no wilful wrong. But that is over. We must part for ever."

Eugénie rose to her feet and stood erect with a calm self-possession which invested her beauty with fresh grace.

Hugh Mostyn thought as he gazed anxiously at her pale, determined face that the queenly mien, the clear cut, classic features looked strangely patrician.

Even the quiet, well chosen words seemed scarcely those of a Norman paysanne.

Love and adversity purify the nature as sharp fires remove from gold its dross and alloy.

"Eugénie," the young man said, earnestly, as he too rose, "hear me and be reasonable. Before I had opportunity to present the matter to my father at a seasonable moment I was stretched on the bed which none thought I should ever again leave a living man. Then I read your letters and could gain no further tidings. I thought you were numbered with the dead, and what mattered it then what my future lot might be? I became indifferent to all earthly things and consented to fulfil my father's will. Though I should call another my bride I knew that henceforward the memory of thee would abide with me for ever until we should meet in a happier world where love would be blest by an eternal reunion."

"I do not blame thee, Hugh," said the girl, her voice softening to an infinite tenderness. "I am happy to know that thou still lovest me. On that memory I also will live while my earthly sojourn may endure. Now let us part. I am but a weak woman, sorely tried. It would wrong thy manhood, to wring my heart afresh. Adieu!"

She moved towards the door.

Hugh stepped forward and intercepted her.

"No!" he cried, passionately. "It shall never be. Ah, Eugénie, if you loved as I do you could never pronounce the sentence of our separation in that cold voice—with that calm speech. Think you that, once having found you, you whom I had deemed lost to me on earth, I will relinquish you? Never! Never!"

"Hugh," said Eugénie, as if struck by a sudden thought, "you never told me your father's name—nothing save that he was rich and powerful. I can learn it here of Mrs. Wilmer readily, but tell it to me yourself."

"My father is the Earl of Thanet!"

"A noble! Ah, ciel! Now I understand better the delay that thou hast made in asking his permission to woo—to wed the poor country girl," she said, with a hard little laugh. "Yes, I understand better now. Thou hast done me bitter wrong, Hugh. Let me pass."

The young man flung himself at her feet in a paroxysm of passionate regret and seized her hand with a clasp from which the girl found it impossible to extricate herself.

"You do me wrong, Eugénie!" he cried, vehemently. "What to me is rank or wealth in comparison with my love for you—you, my empress, next to Heaven the object of my fervent adoration? What to me is the cold-hearted fiancée?—what to me even the parent I love and honour? Let what may be I will not relinquish thee, my love, my life! If need be I will leave my native land for another, and under a new name I will win by humble labour all we shall require to make us happy. In the sight of Heaven you are mine—my love—my wife!"

Eugénie shrank back at the impassioned words.

"Hugh," she said, in a voice instinct with pathos, "is my love less than thine because it impels me to do that which is just and right? I know it is not less, for I sacrifice my heart's

best hopes while I so advise. But, my beloved, we will do right. I should be well content to go to a very wilderness so thou wert there. I ask no part in rank and wealth. What are they to me? But honour is dear alike to the peer and the peasant. Obtain thy freedom from the lady to whom thy troth is plighted, gain thy father's permission to our union, if these two things be possible, then claim me, Hugh," she went on, with a vivid flush over cheek and brow. "Otherwise it shall never be said that I led thee from the path of honour. Farewell!"

And, drawing her hand hastily away, Eugénie sprang from the room.

Then the girl's light, quick steps could be heard on the creaking staircase as she sought the refuge of her own chamber.

Hugh Mostyn arose and, quitting the room, passed slowly and thoughtfully to the one where he had left the wounded man with his attendants.

It had few occupants now.

Robert Wilmer lay with half-closed eyes, drawing laboured breath, and his mother sat on a chair by the couch, her eyes, heavy with repressed tears, fixed on the pale, manly face of the young engineer, while Captain Mostyn's groom was seated by the oaken table spelling out the columns of a week-old county paper by the light of a candle.

Mrs. Wilmer turned her head at the sound of captain's footsteps, then, rising, she placed a chair by the couch where her son lay and resumed her seat.

"The doctor could not stay any longer, Captain Mostyn," she said, in a low tone. "He told me that Robert would not need any care but mine until to-morrow, and that he should call upon you at Mostyn Manor in the morning. The men have gone to Joe Tappin's alehouse. Your horse is put up in the shed and your man is here."

Hugh Mostyn thanked her gravely but kindly.

"By the way, young man," said Mrs. Wilmer, turning to the groom, who had risen at his master's entrance, "I want to have a few words with Captain Mostyn. If you will please step into the kitchen you'll find a good fire, and behind the pantry door there's a barrel of decent ale. Help yourself."

Then as the man left the room with alacrity, for his throat was still parched from the heat and smoke of the burning Dower House, into which he had made a resolute entry after his master, the dame added, in a sharper tone:

"And don't forget to tighten the spigot afterwards."

"Captain Mostyn," Mrs. Wilmer began as the door closed upon the groom. "I am an old woman, one to whom and whose you have shown kindness, one too who respects and honours you much as a true and noble gentleman, and I ask of you now a favour."

"Name it, Mrs. Wilmer. It shall be granted if it be in my power."

"It is that I may speak my mind to you."

Despite his troubled thoughts Hugh Mostyn could not repress a smile at the brusque request.

"Oh, if that's all, Mrs. Wilmer, have no hesitation about that."

"We—Robert and I—have one under the shelter of this roof whom we dearly love."

The captain started involuntarily and glanced at the still face of the young man.

"No, not that way," continued Mrs. Wilmer, interpreting the look with a woman's readiness.

"But my son saved Janie from death and I have heard and cried over her pitiful little history. What I saw a short while since tells me that you, Captain Mostyn, are the man who found the girl in her own land and won her love. Since she has been an inmate of our quiet home her sorrow has day by day lightened. She has grown to be a daughter to me—a sister to Robert—and has been peaceful and content, if happy she never might be more. Now the shadow of a great danger comes over her path again. Oh, Captain Mostyn," the old woman went on in a quavering voice, "do not I pray you break that simple heart already so sorely bruised. Janie

can be taught to you save the toy of a heedless moment—a time bitterly to be repented of. She has twined herself round my old heartstrings by her winning ways—she has been the brightness and life of our home; but I pray you, by all you hold sacred, to see her face no more. We will find means that she shall return to her own land, bitter as the parting will be. Promise me this, sir, I beg."

Hugh Mostyn turned his troubled face to the old woman.

His clear, full eyes looked in hers with an expression in which it seemed impossible deceit could dwell.

"I thank you from my inmost heart, Mrs. Wilmer," he said, solemnly, "for all the kindness which you and your son have shown to Eugénie, and I am very grateful too for your thoughtfulness for her future and the good opinion you have expressed of me. Receive my very earnest thanks," he went on, leaning forward and clasping the thin, aged hand which rested on the coverlet above the wounded man. "For the rest let your mind be assured. The young lady whom you have succoured is my promised bride, bound to me by solemn vows pledged beneath the starry heavens, and in due time to be ratified in the face of day!"

As he ended his earnest speech Hugh Mostyn glanced at Robert Wilmer's face.

The half-closed lids had risen and the engineer had evidently listened to the words just uttered.

"Mr. Wilmer," Hugh continued, "I owe you a debt of gratitude which nothing can repay. I owe you a double life. You rescued me once from imminent death—you saved me a second time when you bore Eugénie forth from the poison fumes of that lonely room. In life—in death—you are to me a dearly loved brother!"

CHAPTER XXII.

One mingling truth with falsehood—sneers with smiles—
A thread of candour with a web of wiles;
A plain, blunt show of briefly spoken seeming,
To hide the bloodless heart's soul-hardened scheming;
A lip of lies—a face formed to conceal;
And, without feelings, mock at all who feel;
With a vile mask a Gorgon would disown—
A cheek of parchment and an eye of stone. BYRON.

THREE days had passed since that on which the Marquis D'Aubrión sought the interview with his wife which had affected her so deeply.

The old noble sat alone in his cozy study on this gloomy afternoon, looking more worn and haggard than ever.

In truth, things went but badly with him. At heart he bore the burden of a secret sorrow which could never be forgotten.

Then too all around him seemed bent upon the frustration of the one cherished purpose which alone now held any interest in life for him.

Since that last meeting he had not seen the marchioness, who remained secluded in her own apartments, to which only Hélène, her confessor, the physician and a confidential maid had access.

Hélène appeared persistently to avoid her father as much as possible. When she attended at the family meals she scarcely lifted her eyes or spoke either to him or to her cousin; but more often, on various pretexts, the girl shared her mother's repast in the boudoir of the marchioness.

Left thus alone to the society of Georges, the marquis found it little more entertaining or lively than that of his daughter—for the Parisian's face usually wore a gloomy, sullen look very different to his habitual airy, debonaire manner, and in conversation his brilliant fluency had dwindled down to a monosyllabic style of reply not at all diverting or pleasant for a moody man who sought some refuge from his own troubled thoughts.

There remained then but the company of Cochart, who still stayed at the château; but this was even more trying to the marquis than that of the rebellious members of his own family.

At least they must yield, he told himself a

thousand times. His wife would live down her grief, his daughter would become a happy bride—for after all girls like to be married, and who ever heard of a French maiden choosing her "futur"—and as for his nephew, why, Georges could have no strong affection save for an English horse or bull-dog; and the marquis would send orders to Tattersall's that no money should be spared to secure the pick of English stables as a peace-offering to the disappointed dandy.

But Cochart? Ah, there the marquis confessed himself foiled. There had been a strange change in the cringing, obsequious, supple tool of late. He had not on some occasions scrupled to controvert his employer's orders and to thwart his will. Nay, more than once this had been done with a degree of insolence which but a few months since would have insured summary ejection from the gates of the Chateau D'Aubriion, never to return.

But now that could not be. As the marquis pored long and anxiously over the numerous entries in a little morocco-bound private ledger which he had taken from the strongest iron safe of the adjacent muniment room he acknowledged to himself with a bitter groan that it could not be, for the broad acres of the marquis's paternal estates were hampered with terribly heavy debts, which during the past year had increased with fearful rapidity.

It happened in this wise. The revenues of the demesne had sufficed for all the requirements of the D'Aubriion family and left a fair margin for the display of that hospitality which the marquis had delighted to exercise both at Paris and at his chateau.

But for some reason he desired to obtain possession of a large sum of ready money. Cochart had pointed to speculation on the Bourse as a certain means of obtaining it speedily and had offered to conduct such speculations. The desired sum was never realised, but day by day the hapless nobleman felt that his estates became more deeply involved.

The notary had desired an interview for this afternoon ere he left D'Aubriion on the morrow for Paris.

As his knock sounded on the door the marquis hastily closed the silver lock of his ledger and dropped it into a drawer of the writing-table at which he sat before bidding Cochart enter.

Jacques came in with his usual stealthy manner and took a chair opposite his employer.

His ugly face was rendered a shade more hideous than usual by a deeper pallor of the parchment skin and a greener gleam in his small serpent eyes.

"I am but little in the humour to discuss business matters to-day, Cochart," said the marquis, curtly. "Cannot they stand over until your return from Paris?"

"Pardon me, Monsieur le Marquis, if I say that most decidedly they cannot. They are in truth affairs of most pressing moment, and I may not return for many days."

"Ah! so long an absence. On private business or on mine, may I ask?"

"On private business—but—it—may concern you, Monsieur le Marquis," replied the notary, very slowly, and a flash of exultant light gleamed from his eyes.

"Indeed? And the portion of your errand that concerns me is—what?"

"I cannot tell you, Monsieur le Marquis, until my return."

"Très bien. Let us then deal with what you came to say, and speedily as may be."

"I will be brief. I wish to speak on two subjects—one business, the other domestic. I will take the former first. There has been a panic on the Bourse, caused by revolutionary rumours, and all stocks have fallen rapidly—as quickly as but two days since they had risen. At the rise I directed our agent to sell; he misunderstood me and sold at the fall."

The marquis gave vent to a violent execration.

"What were the stocks?" he said, hoarsely.

"The San Jacinto Six per Cent., the Hellenic Preference, the Mexican Hard Dollar—"

"I hold none."

"Pardon, Monsieur le Marquis. You gave me carte blanche in the matter, and six weeks ago I sold out the Five per Cent. Rentes and reinvested in the Mexicans."

"What! all?" cried the marquis, in a terrible voice.

"All!"

"Five hundred thousand francs?"

"That is the correct amount, Monsieur le Marquis."

The old noble drooped his head to the table in utter prostration.

Then he raised it and looked about in bewilderment.

"Five hundred thousand francs!—and the other losses! This means ruin!"

His wandering eyes caught the cruel, cold look on Cochart's face, and he sprang up frantically and caught the notary by the throat ere he could rise from his chair.

"Dog!" shouted the marquis. "I believe you have betrayed me. Could I be certain of it I would strangle you as you sit."

The fingers tightened vindictively.

Under that iron grip Cochart writhed vainly. His dull skin darkened, the snaky eyes protruded horribly, showing a ring of livid white round each.

(To be Continued.)

CONVICTED.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Soon after the departure of the Marquis of Mountheron Lady Vivian returned to the house and shut herself in the privacy of her rooms.

She made her appearance at luncheon as usual.

Afterward she took part in the pleasures of her guests, and was unusually gay.

Later, her guests went out to ride or drive upon the Bluff road and in the home park, and Lady Vivian, excusing herself from accompanying them, retired to her own private rooms, and sent for Alex to read to her.

The girl's pure, softly-modulated, high-bred tones could not win her from her thoughts. Alex noticed her absent and troubled expression, and ascribed it to the recent visit of the marquis, of which she was aware.

"I am not quite in the mood for literature, to-day, Alex," said Lady Vivian, apologising for her inattention. "In truth, I have so many things to occupy me, that I cannot command my thoughts. You are pale, my dear. Was last evening's dissipation too much for you?"

"Oh, no, madame," answered Alex, hastily.

"I have seen at times upon your face," said Lady Vivian, "an expression that contrasts singularly with your youth. An expression that seems to denote an intense and fixed purpose, a resoluteness, and a perplexity of mind, all at once. It is a peculiar expression, my dear, and possibly I may have misinterpreted it. You seem to me to have some secret anxiety and sorrow. If you need a friend, I trust that you will not hesitate to confide in me."

"You are very good, madame."

"I am only selfish, my dear. I like to see happy faces around me. Is there nothing I can do for you? If there is anything, do not hesitate to call upon me. I have taken a great liking to you, and what is friendship worth if no drafts can be made upon it for sympathy or help?"

"I do not need human help," answered Alex, briefly. "No one can help me but Him, to whom all hearts and all secrets are known."

"You are troubled about your father, perhaps?" said Lady Vivian, inspired by her deep interest in Alex to know more of her. "This is your first separation from him, is it not?"

"The first since I was a very little child. We have been all in all to each other ever since I can remember."

"Then I do not wonder that you are troubled at times, my dear. It is very hard to part from

those we love," and Lady Vivian sighed. "Have you heard from your father since your arrival in England?"

"No, my lady. I expect a letter by every mail."

The pure young face was so wistful and sorrowful in its expression that Lady Vivian was touched.

Nature, unknown to herself, was tugging at her heart-strings. The instinct of the mother awoke in her.

She could not guess that this girl, with the beauty of a grand young goddess, was her own and only child whom she believed dead and buried in her ancestral vaults.

No dream of such a possibility could enter her soul, and yet her heart was drawn to her daughter with a warmth and tenderness that frightened and startled herself.

"You have not told me anything of your father, my dear," she said, with a winning sweetness that made the girl's heart bound. "I should like to win your entire confidence. I should like you to be more to me than merely a hired companion. Tell me something of your father, Alex. Your mother has long been dead, I think you said. Have you no relatives in England?"

"None who know of my existence, madame."

"And you were brought up in Greece? Pardon me, my dear, but I fancy that your father may have met with losses that have forced him to live abroad," said Lady Vivian, delicately.

"There are very many English gentlemen who are compelled to live on the Continent from some such reason. I do not wish to intrude upon your confidence, but if there is anything I could do to bring your father nearer to you I would gladly do it. I have influence and, through my brother, the Duke of Clyffebourne, could procure for your father a government appointment. Would he like this?"

"You are kind, my lady, very kind, but my father will never return to England," said Alex desolately. "Unless some great good-fortune comes to him, an especial good fortune which now seems as remote as the stars."

"The death of a relative, perhaps, whom your father expects to succeed?" said Lady Vivian. "You need not answer, Alex. I can wait for your confidence. Only think over my suggestion, and mention it in your next letter to your father. Do you resemble him, my dear?"

"Very much, but I also resemble my mother," said Alex, calmly, although her heart was full of conflicting emotions that required all her power of self-control to repress.

Lady Vivian pursued the subject with a curiosity and interest she had not felt in any person for years.

"Your father must be a very handsome man," she said. "Has he eyes like yours, Alex?"

"They are blue, as mine are," answered the girl, cautiously. "Papa is very handsome, tall and stately, and grand and noble; and he is as good and gentle as he is handsome."

"You are enthusiastic. I wonder that you left him, my dear. You were his only child, you have said."

"Our house was burned by the brigands," said Alex, "and the bandit-chief had attempted to carry me away from my home. I was not safe there, and I begged papa to let me come to England. It was hard for him to consent, but he did consent, and I came."

"Lord Kingscourt had a remarkable and exciting adventure among the brigands of Greece lately," said Lady Vivian. "He was a captive among them for three months, and was ill afterwards at a vinedresser's cottage, I think, for as many months more. What was the name of your persecutor?"

"Spiridon."

"That was the name of the earl's enemy. You ought to compare notes with Lord Kingscourt, my dear."

Alex was truthfulness itself. She had been tempted more than once to tell Lady Vivian that she had been acquainted with the earl in Greece.

It seemed to her dishonourable to her employer to hide from her the secret of her previous acquaintance with the earl.

A revelation of the relations between herself and her lover could not possibly affect in any way her mission or imperil her father.

Her face grew suddenly scarlet, as she said, tremulously:

"Have you heard the whole story of Lord Kingscourt's adventures in Greece, Lady Vivian?"

"Certainly, my dear. I heard it from Lord Kingscourt himself, and from the Honourable Bertie Knollys," replied Lady Vivian, in surprise. "I have heard of their privations in the bandit's cave, of Spiridon's attempted outrage when he determined to cut off their ears, and of their rescue at the very crisis of affairs by a young girl, beautiful as Psyche—as heroic as any ancient warrior. The earl must have lost his heart to that lovely Grecian, for he remained three months in her house, where he was ill of rheumatism. Bertie Knollys raves about her. By the way, my dear, Mr. Knollys seems greatly to admire you," and she smiled. "He hovered about you last evening like a moth about a flame, although the earl was not less devoted."

Alex's face burned.

"Lady Vivian," she said, bravely, "the young girl who rescued Lord Kingscourt and Mr. Knollys was I."

"You?"

"Yes, madame. And Lord Kingscourt was not ill at any vine-dresser's cottage, but at my father's villa. Our servants nursed him."

"I did not dream of this," exclaimed the lady, amazed.

"I should have told you before, but I had not quite made up my mind what I ought to do."

"And you are the young girl of whom I have heard so much?" inquired Lady Vivian. "Have you told me all, my dear?"

"Not quite all," answered Alex, drooping her tell-tale face. "Lord Kingscourt was fond of me, and he wanted me to marry him. Papa refused his consent, and—that is all. When I came to England I had no expectation of ever meeting the earl."

"I am sure of that, my dear. But what a little romance. I never suspected that you had met the earl before, but now I wonder that I have been so blind. Is this marriage quite out of the question, Alex?"

"Quite, Lady Vivian, unless the good fortune I alluded to should come to papa. There is no engagement between Vane and me. He is free to marry whom he will."

"I know him well enough to know that with him to love once is to love always. I know him to be the soul of honour, the worthy representative of a great and noble house, and I should like to play the part of fairy godmother to you both. Be frank with me, Alex. Is it lack of fortune that separates you?"

"It is more than that," cried the girl, passionately. "You cannot help us, Lady Vivian. No one but heaven can help us. Even if papa should give his consent to the marriage, I would not marry Lord Kingscourt."

"And yet you love him?"

The light that leaped to the girl's sapphire eyes and transfigured the sad young face was sufficient answer.

"There is some mystery here," thought the Lady Vivian. "What can it be?"

Her warmest sympathies were enlisted in behalf of the lovers.

She resolved to hear Lord Kingscourt's story also, and to obtain from him if possible some clue to the mystery, the existence of which she had detected.

"I am glad you have told me this, my dear," she said, gravely. "I don't care about secrets, and it is right that I should know this. But it need not be told to others. Our guests need not be informed that you are the young Greek heroine they have all raved over. Perhaps everything will come out right yet. Keep up your courage, Alex, and trust in Providence."

She bent forward and kissed the girl upon the forehead.

With a wild and sudden impulse Alex seized the Lady Vivian's hand and covered it with impetuous kisses.

The girl's face was so pale, and her manner so full of excitement, that her employer wondered.

"You are over-excited, my dear," she said, tenderly. "These recollections are too much for you. I will see what can be done for this little romance of yours. Trust in me, and perhaps everything will come out well."

She dismissed Alex tenderly, bidding her dress for dinner.

When she was once more alone Lady Vivian meditated upon the story she had just heard, and again said to herself:

"What is this mystery that makes marriage with the earl impossible? I will hear what he has to say. I shall not be satisfied until I know Alex thoroughly, but that she is pure as an angel I am certain. I will see what I can do to clear away the obstacle between this young pair."

CHAPTER XXIX.

ALEX appeared at dinner without any trace of recent excitement or agitation.

Her composure and self-forgetfulness elicited the approval of Lady Vivian, whose own manners were always marked by that self-repose which is considered the perfection of good breeding.

After dinner a little dance was inaugurated, and Alex played unweariedly for an hour or more.

Then conversation and quiet amusements occupied the place of dancing, and the girl was free.

She stole to a window-seat, and half-concealed by the window-draperies, gazed out upon the bright scene with sympathetic face.

The glowing fires, the mellow light, the gay dinner-dresses, all delighted Alex.

Everything contrasted with her life in Greece.

But best of all she liked to gaze at the Lady Vivian, whom she was now growing to regard, half with passionate feeling and love, and half with a feeling of bitter jealousy, because of her supposed relations with Lord Mountheron.

"How can she forget papa, even if she believes him dead?" Alex said to herself, bitterly. "But how beautiful she is! If papa could only see her now!"

Lady Markham approached the girl with a false smile on her thin face and with her heart full of bitterness.

The baronet's widow's envy of Alex was becoming intense.

Lady Vivian's affection for the girl, after such brief acquaintance, was plainly evident, and Lady Markham conceived herself injured by that affection, and feared, with the suspicion of a small mind, that Alex would employ her influence again in the chaperone.

"It is ridiculous, Lady Vivian's fancy for this creature," she thought. "The girl is an adventurer, and I mean to prove it! To think of a woman of the world, a duke's daughter, and one who has been called the proudest lady in England—to think of her falling in love with a girl from no one knows where, and whose antecedents are wrapped in mystery! The girl is in this house for a purpose, but I'll expose her, the little serpent!"

She pushed a chair near the window-seat and sat down.

Alex's rapt glance at Lady Vivian did not escape her.

"You seem lonely, Miss Strange," she said. "Why do you not study an album, or join the young people?"

"I like to look on," replied Alex, frankly. "Everything is so new to me in England that I enjoy looking on as well as participating in pleasures."

"But 'looking on' has an appearance of watching—of espionage," said Lady Markham, drily.

The girl's sensitive face changed colour.

"I cannot believe that I should be so misjudged," she said, with girlish dignity.

"Is it misjudgment?" cried Lady Markham,

pitilessly. "Come, come, Miss Strange. What are we to expect of a young lady who has no relatives in England and yet is English born? What are we to think of a young lady whose father permits her to travel from Greece to England unattended, and leaves her to find a situation for herself? I prefer people whose antecedents are public—about whom is no shadow of mystery."

"Lady Vivian is well contented with my references," said Alex, proudly.

"Ah, yes. And Lady Vivian, for a woman of the world, is the most guileless and unsuspecting lady in existence, it appears. And therefore it behoves those attached to her to look sharply after her interests," said the baronet's widow. "I don't believe that you are what you seem, Miss Strange!"

"Madame?"

"Oh, you may be indignant, but I believe that you are here in this house for some purpose of your own," said Lady Markham. "I am a good judge of character, and I feel that you are here for some private scheme; be warned, Miss Strange, Lady Vivian has friends who will watch over her, and if you mean her any harm you will get yourself into trouble."

The girl crested haughtily her proud young head.

Had the widow known her real name and position her insolence would have been turned into servility.

"I shall report your observations to Lady Vivian," said Alex, coldly.

"Do, and prove yourself to be the treacherous creature I believe you are," said Lady Markham, quite beside herself with anger. "You will find that I am a very old and trusted friend of Lady Vivian, that I was her mother's friend, and that a stranger cannot have sufficient influence to turn my friend against me. Tell her, and see what will happen to you."

Alex did not reply.

She realised that she, a stranger in the house, could not complain to Lady Vivian of the petty insults of Lady Markham. Possibly her word might be doubted.

Possibly she might be sent away if she were to complain.

Besides, the matter seemed too small for complaint.

She could only bear the annoyance with the best grace she could summon.

"At least," she said, "I am not compelled to listen to you, Lady Markham. Be good enough to excuse me."

She arose and crossed the floor and entered the hall. The outer door was open, and the sound of the waves beating against the cliff was heard.

Alex hesitated a moment, then hurried up to her room, procured a shawl, and came down again, hastening out of doors.

A brisk wind was blowing. Alex wandered to the cliff, and sat down in the shelter of a tall rock, and listened to the lashing of the sea against the rocks.

"I have made an enemy in this house," she thought, sorrowfully. "It is well for me that Mrs. Ingestre has offered me a temporary home at Mount Heron. I am likely to be turned away from here. But what can I have done to incur Lady Markham's dislike? I have treated her with the utmost courtesy."

The shadows lay thick around the cliff. The sky was overcast. The white foam of the sea beneath was visible through the gloom below.

A storm was evidently brewing. Alex drew her shawl closer, and shrank back in the shelter of the picturesque boulder for protection from the wind.

The sound of voices and steps approaching were presently heard, startling her from her reverie. She turned around hastily.

A man and woman, arm in arm, were drawing near the edge of the cliff, and were only a few feet distant from her.

Alex only nestled closer in her shelter. She believed they were guests of the house, and would pass on without seeing her.

But at the first utterance of the man Alex

was spell-bound. She could not move or speak. For the man and woman were Pierre Renaud and Felicie, Lady Vivian's tiring-woman, and they were conversing of Alex.

Pierre Renaud had ridden over from Mount Heron to see Felicie, to whom he had long been attached.

Finding the servants' hall well filled he had asked his compatriot to walk with him up the cliff and Felicie had consented, believing all the guests within doors. Renaud had private business with his countrywoman, and that business concerned Alex.

"Who is this new companion of my lady?" he asked, with affected carelessness. "Who is this Mademoiselle Strange?"

"She is a young lady from foreign parts," replied Felicie. "When did you see her?"

"Last evening, at the castle. She had the air of a young duchess," said Renaud. "Is she not some relative of my lady?"

"Oh, no. She is my lady's companion, nothing more. But if you have seen her, Pierre, you have seen the most beautiful young lady in all England."

"And one like enough to the Herons of Mount Heron to be of their race," declared Renaud.

"And she is the image of my lady, too. It is a singular coincidence. Have you not noticed the resemblance?"

"From the first, and so has my lady."

"I should fancy you would be jealous of this new-comer, Felicie."

"I. And why? My lady loves me, Pierre, but I am no companion for her. I have too little education to interest her in conversation. I cannot read or sing to her when she is wearied. I am her ladyship's maid, and necessary to her, but I cannot be her companion any more than I can be her housekeeper or butler," responded Felicie, sensibly. "There is room for Mademoiselle Strange and me too, and if Mademoiselle interests my lady, then I rejoice that she is here."

"What relatives has she?" asked Renaud.

"Mademoiselle, I mean."

"A father only."

Renaud started.

"Oh, a father, eh?" he exclaimed. "She has a father?"

There was something so significant in his expression and tone that Alex trembled. Could the man suspect her identity? Had her fatal resemblance to her parents brought suspicion of her birth?

"Where does this father live, Felicie?" inquired Renaud, after a brief pause.

"How inquisitive you are, Pierre," said Felicie. "I see that mademoiselle has made a great impression upon you. Her father lives in Greece, I believe. He has lived there many years, but mademoiselle is English in everything. It is plain to see that the father is well-born."

Again was a little silence. The sea seemed to roar more loudly, and the wind was growing stronger.

Under her new fears Alex crouched in a dead silence, feeling as if paralysed.

At last Renaud spoke again, and as Felicie fancied, with a total change of subject.

"Poor milady," he sighed. "Her lot has been very bitter. Will she marry my lord, do you think, Felicie?"

"Certainly. They are sure to marry. They are even now betrothed, I think, but this is in confidence."

"The most absolute. Milady is very rich, and she has no child. She is a duke's daughter and a duke's sister, and will be a great match even for my lord. But if her child had lived, my lord would have been only Monsieur Ingestre, nobody at all, with nothing a year, and the child would have been Marchioness of Mountheron, as the title and estates are entailed upon the female line in default of male heirs. Ma foi! If the child had lived. But it didn't live!"

"Of course not."

"It was drowned in the Mediterranean, I heard. We, my lord and I, were in Nice at the time. The little marquise's death made a grand

sensation. But the body was found after many days. I forget how it was identified."

"By the pretty golden hair, and by the height and other peculiarities of person. The little clothes were nearly all gone, and the pretty face was disfigured beyond recognition. But no other child was perceived to be missing, and that one must have been the little mademoiselle. My lady identified her; so did his grace the duke, so did I, so did the nurses."

"Of course. Then there could have been no doubt—hear the wind, Felicie!" and he changed the subject again. "Do you know why I came here to-night?"

"To renew old acquaintance, I suppose."

"We have kept up the old acquaintance well for eighteen years, eh, Felicie? I have been faithful, have I not? You have always refused to leave milady, but as she is to marry my lord, why should you not marry too? Fancy the visits I have made you during the last eighteen years. I have come and gone without a word of encouragement, and yet I never thought of another woman to love her. Yet if I wished I could marry a gentlewoman," he added, boastfully.

"You, Pierre! It is not fitting to boast in that way!"

"It is true. But I have preferred to wait for you. I cannot wait much longer. If you do not marry me someone else shall. Now what do you say?"

"I have my savings," said prudent Felicie. "My lady has always been most generous to me. I have a handsome dower, and I don't mind saying that I have thought of this marriage. But you are different from me, Pierre, and you would bring me to want in a year."

(To be Continued.)

THE LORD OF STRATHMERE; OR, THE HIDDEN CRIME.

CHAPTER IV.

THE murder of Lord Strathmere became the talk of all England.

The unfortunate baron had not been popular in society; he had not been kindly or benevolent; he had not been considerate of his tenants, or good to the poor; he had bestowed nothing in charity; he had not patronised arts or sciences; the world had been none the better for his existence, and yet the entire country thrilled with horror at the manner of his death.

He was known to have been cruel and miserly, to have hoarded his immense wealth, to have been unjust and selfish; but his foul assassination blotted out the memory of his faults, and people spoke of him kindly and with genuine regret.

Scarcely one person of all who had known and loved Ralph Chandos believed in his innocence, after hearing the terrible array of evidence against him.

Mr. Pelham had no doubt of his guilt, Millis, the butler, grew taciturn under his conviction of his guilt, the old housekeeper made excuses in her own heart, but could not maintain the innocence of her young master.

Brabazon remained at Strathmere Park, affecting to be overcome by his uncle's death and his cousin's wickedness; the county gentlemen declared that never was a clearer case of deliberate murder against any one than this against Ralph Chandos, and of all Chandos's world only Gerda Pelham believed in him, trusted, and defended him.

The murdered baron was attended to his grave, after lying in state for a week at the park, by a vast assemblage of county people and tenants.

And then public interest concentrated itself

upon Ralph Chandos, who was lying in gaol at Lewes.

His trial had been fixed to come off at the next assizes. Norman Brabazon, affecting to be overwhelmed at the disgrace that had come upon his family, engaged the most skilful advocates to defend Chandos, and was looked upon by everyone as a most noble man, whose affection for his cousin made him oblivious of the heinousness of that cousin's crime.

Upon the morning of the opening of the assizes, while Brabazon was preparing to attend court, he received a telegram from the Foreign Secretary announcing his appointment to the post for which he had so long angled—that of Governor of Australia.

Perhaps the fact that he stood so near to the Strathmere succession might have lent influence in his behalf. Perhaps the nearness of that succession had bestirred the influential relatives of his late wife to renewed efforts in his behalf.

At any rate, his ambition was gratified, and the appointment he had so ardently coveted was his.

As he read the message his first idea was to decline the post offered him. With Chandos out of the way he would be Baron Strathmere, and proprietor of immense estates.

Why should he go to the antipodes when a great political and social career was opening to him in England? He loved Gerda Pelham, too, with all his soul. How could he place the seas between him and her?"

But Brabazon was one of the most cunning and cautious of men.

People knew how he had angled for this foreign appointment.

If he were to decline it what might they not say of him? He reflected at length upon the matter.

"Ralph will be hanged," he thought, "and of course that is a disgrace that reflects upon his relatives, and I might as well be out of the country for a year till some new sensation occurs to take the place of this. In a year Gerda Pelham will have forgotten him. In a year everything will be settled, and I can return to England as Lord Strathmere, and master of Strathmere Park. It will be wiser to go."

The carriage was in waiting. Putting on a fur-lined overcoat Brabazon entered the vehicle, wrapped himself in the furred rugs, and was driven to Lewes.

The case of Ralph Chandos was second on the docket.

The first case was disposed of within an hour.

Then came on the one in which we are interested.

It is not our purpose to give a full and exact report of Ralph Chandos's trial.

Such a report can be found in any of the newspapers of that day, and to them we must refer the reader for many particulars for which we have not space.

The prisoner at the bar was commanded to stand up and state whether he was or was not guilty.

Ralph Chandos pleaded "Not Guilty" in a firm and quiet tone, looking around him with calm and fearless eyes.

He had learned during his weary incarceration to control a spirit which people now remembered to have been always impetuous and wilful.

His noble face, grave and thoughtful, was not cast down.

He did not know all the evidence against him, and knowing himself innocent, he had little fear that the legal tribunal which he deeply respected could decide against him.

Nevertheless, he appreciated the gravity of his situation.

The court-house was thronged. The trial was a cause célèbre.

There were present reporters from most of the newspapers.

A throng of ladies full of curiosity, and some regarding the prisoner with sympathy on account of his blonde beauty.

Many county people, and the usual crowd that

frequent murder trials with a morbid love of horrors.

Mr. Pelham was there, and his daughter, deeply veiled, was beside him.

Upon his arrival Brabazon joined them, but Miss Pelham was silent, taking notice of his presence only by a bow, and speaking to no one, not even to her father.

The first witness called was Dean, the valet of the murdered baron, who had been the first to visit his master's room upon the morning after the murder.

He described his visit to Lord Strathmere's chamber, his discovery of the murder, and the position of the body when found.

The physician was next called to prove that Lord Strathmere had been murdered, and he stated that the body was cold and rigid when he examined it, and that, in his opinion, the murder had taken place between the hours of one and two of the morning.

Then Millis, the butler, was called to the stand.

His testimony was given with great reluctance, but he deposed that upon the night of Lord Strathmere's murder, after closing the house as usual, he had spent an hour in the housekeeper's room to gossip upon the events of the evening.

The prosecuting counsel here demanded what were those events.

The witness endeavoured to evade answering, but was compelled to declare that the "events" were the quarrel between Lord Strathmere and Mr. Chandos, and the expulsion of the latter by the former from the house—Chandos being ordered to leave Strathmere Park in the morning.

Being further interrogated, he declared that he did not know the cause of the quarrel between the uncle and nephew, but he had caught a few words as he passed through the hall, and those few words were the baron's order of expulsion to his nephew.

After further questions upon the part of counsel for the prosecution, and one or two objections upon the part of Chandos's counsel, the witness further deposed that he had gone up to his room after midnight, had undressed and gone to bed.

He had lain awake over an hour meditating. Then it had flashed upon him that he had not looked at the drawing-room windows as usual, and they had been opened that day.

He had at once arisen and put on his clothes. While he was hastily dressing the stable clock struck the hour of one.

Soon after he went down to the drawing-room and examined the windows. They were fast. He had then made a tour of the entire lower floor of the dwelling, having a strange uneasiness.

Finally, having seen that everything was secure, he had returned to his room. Upon ascending the great stairs to the upper hall, he had seen a man emerge from Lord Strathmere's room.

The hall light was turned low, but in the dimness he had made out the figure with some distinctness. The man had halted at sight of him as if transfixed. Then the man, recovering himself, had glided along the hall, entered Mr. Ralph's chamber, closed the door and locked it. To the best of his knowledge and belief, the witness declared that the man who thus emerged from Lord Strathmere's room at that untimely hour of the night, and who had entered Mr. Chandos's room with the air of proprietor, was Ralph Chandos.

The prisoner started, made a movement to rise, and sank back upon his seat.

The prosecuting counsel asked why the witness had not inquired into the untimely visit, and the witness replied that he had listened at his lordship's door an instant, but all was still within.

He had concluded that Mr. Ralph had made a visit of reconciliation to his uncle and had remained late.

Chandos could not avoid seeing that Millis's testimony was likely to prove fatal to him. His counsel endeavoured to shake it, but the old

butler could not be confused or intimidated. He adhered to his story, under the strictest cross-questioning, without the slightest variation.

Mr. Pelham was next summoned.

He deposed that the prisoner had been betrothed to Miss Pelham; that the young lady would have a fortune upon her marriage, and that he desired her to marry one her equal in pecuniary resources, having an abhorrence of a fortune-hunter.

He had so informed Mr. Chandos upon his visit to Pelham Wole, and, at Chandos's solicitation, had ridden over with him to Strathmere Park to discuss the matter with the baron.

Then followed an exact account of an interview with Lord Strathmere, his lordship's violence, Chandos's anger, and finally the baron's order to his nephew to leave the house in the morning, and his lordship's bidding his nephew to earn his own living, if an allowance of two hundred pounds a year would not suffice for his support.

Norman Brabazon replaced Mr. Pelham at the stand.

He corroborated the last witness, but with such apparent reluctance, that poor Chandos, who had never liked him, began to feel his heart warm towards him.

Nevertheless, the arch-hypocrite made the case doubly damaging to his cousin, while affecting to pity him, and he also excited the warm commendation of every person present for his delicacy of feeling.

Of every person save one. And that one was Miss Pelham.

She watched Brabazon behind her veil, and it seemed to her sharpened perceptions that he was false and insincere.

A motive for the murder on the part of Ralph Chandos had been clearly established. He had loved Miss Pelham, but his poverty had been a bar to his marriage with her.

His uncle, in a fit of passion, had cast him off. Mr. Pelham had broken off the match with his daughter, but the murder of Lord Strathmere had given the ineligible suitor wealth and rank, and had promised him every success in his dearest hopes.

This testimony occupied the first day of the trial.

The second day found the same audience as before. The prisoner was noticed as being worn, as if he had passed a sleepless night. Miss Pelham was the first witness called.

The prosecuting counsel desired to prove by her the state of mind of her lover, who had spent the evening before the murder with her, and who had quitted her presence at about ten o'clock, some three hours before the commission of the crime.

Miss Pelham had desired not to be called upon to testify, but personal wishes were of no account, and she was obliged to take her place upon the stand.

She was requested to lay aside her veil. Obeying, she revealed a small, tender, exquisite face, pure, and beautiful, yet pale as a lily, a lovely yet spirited face illumined by a pair of dusk-brown eyes.

Her low, broad brow was shaded by rippling brown hair.

She was slender and graceful, of medium height, and in more joyous hours one could see that her beauty would be resplendent and radiant.

Now the shadow of a great apprehension and grief was upon her.

She spoke in a low, soft, rich voice, and her manners and breeding were of the highest order.

The prosecuting counsel dealt very gently with her.

In answer to his questionings she deposed that the prisoner at the bar was her lover, and that she had been engaged to marry him.

In a firmer tone, and with a look at Chandos, she declared that she was still betrothed to him.

He had come to visit her upon the evening before Lord Strathmere's murder. He was somewhat excited.

His uncle had ordered him to leave Strathmere

Park in the morning, never to return during his lordship's lifetime.

He talked of studying for a profession, of earning a fortune, and had begged her to wait for him.

She had so promised when her father had entered the room, and had told Chandos that he—Mr. Pelham—did not consider him an eligible suitor for Miss Pelham.

The banker had told them that the engagement between them must be dissolved, as the baron might live twenty years yet, and he would not allow Miss Pelham to marry a poor man, whatever his distant expectations. She had assured her lover that she would wait a lifetime for him if necessary, and he had gone away in great agitation.

Of course Miss Pelham's deposition, notwithstanding her evident sympathy with him and her softening touches, only did her lover harm.

She drew her veil over her face and retired to her seat under her father's escort.

Dean, the valet, was next recalled, and he testified to his visit to Chandos's room after the discovery of the murder, and seeing blood in the wash-bowl of Mr. Chandos's dressing-room, as if the murderer had washed his hands there.

The prisoner had appeared dazed and startled at his entrance, he thought. His appearance he considered that of a guilty person determined to "brazen out" the matter.

The prisoner was about to throw out the stained water when he entered, and he had prevented that design and closed the room until the arrival of the police.

Chandos bit his lips fiercely. It was hard to keep silence when so misrepresented, but his counsel whispered to him that he would hurt his cause by a show of violent indignation.

The police-inspector next testified to the examination of Chandos's apartment, to seeing the stained water in the wash-bowl, and to the discovery of the blood-stained dagger cleverly concealed in the inner side of the chimney.

This revelation fairly stunned the prisoner.

The chimney-sweep gave his testimony in regard to finding the dagger. The police-officers corroborated him.

Then the college friend who had presented Chandos with the dagger in University days was summoned.

He recognised and positively identified the weapon as the same. Others identified it as the possession of Chandos.

After some further testimony not necessary to be given here the counsel for the prosecution rested the case.

There was no rebutting testimony to be given. The counsel for the prisoner had failed to shake the evidence of a single witness against the prisoner.

He brought forward a tutor or two, the rector of the parish church, and some others to testify to Chandos's nobility of character, his fine sense of honour, and his frankness, honesty, and perfect truthfulness, but such testimony as this had no effect upon the point at issue.

A good man may be carried away by impulse, and no one doubted that Ralph Chandos had in some such mood committed murder.

The counsel for the prisoner made a fervid appeal for his client. He spoke of his youth and excellent character.

He bade the jury look on that face, and see if they read there any consciousness of crime. He was one of the most skillful advocates of his time, and on this occasion he surpassed himself.

His speech was brilliant, keen, scintillating, one moment flashing with wit, the next full of pathos that drew tears from hardened eyes. He made allusion to the young maiden whose love and trust in the prisoner at the bar were so apparent; in burning words he appealed to the jury for this man's life, telling them that they would have to answer to Heaven for their verdict.

One or two ladies were so moved by his torrent of eloquence that they fainted and were borne out of the court-room.

The jurymen sat entranced, and the counsel for the prosecution moved uneasily in his chair.

As for Brabazon, who had secured this splendid advocate at the price of a magnificent retaining fee, he writhed in his chair, cursing himself for his folly.

He believed that the jury must inevitably acquit the prisoner after this magnificent plea, whatever the evidence against him.

The prosecuting counsel made an elaborate speech, demanding that justice should be done and that crime committed in high places should be punished equally with that committed in hovels.

He depicted the old baron asleep in his room, the approach of the assassin, the stealthy step, the dimness of the chamber, the fatal dagger-thrust.

He demanded that the man, the trusted nephew and heir, who had sent that soul to the bar of Heaven before its time, should be punished with the utmost rigour of the law, else the great Lawgiver would attain them all, judge and jury, of the crime of blood-guiltiness!

The judge summed up the case in a cool, unbiassed manner, calmly weighing the evidence. The jury retired to their deliberations.

This was upon the third day of the trial. The jury remained locked up all night. One or two of their number, worked upon by the impassioned eloquence of the great advocate, were at first for an absolute acquittal, in spite of the frightful array of evidence against the accused, but they were soon made to see, by their fellows, that an acquittal was inadmissible. Being obstinate, they held out against a verdict of murder in the first degree.

The good qualities of Chandos were enumerated.

The faults of his murdered uncle were rehearsed.

Few of the jurymen believed the crime to have been premeditated, but were convinced that Chandos had gone to his uncle with a view to reconciliation, and had been exasperated by his relative into a temporary madness, in which he had committed the crime of which he was accused.

We need not dwell upon the deliberations of the jury, for they are a matter of record.

At ten o'clock the next morning the jury filed back into the court-room, the foreman announcing that they had arrived at a decision.

(To be Continued)

LITTLE WINNY'S EXPLOIT.

JANE's little charge had at last fallen asleep. Time enough had been consumed in the process, for, as Jane phrased it later to her friend, the cook:

"One mortal hour I sat there, by the clock, and that plaguey child never once shutting her eyes, any more than if she'd been a Chinese image without any lids."

But she was asleep at length, and soundly too—a fact which Jane proved by making all sorts of noises, in her efforts to get quietly out of the room.

First she stumbled over a footstool; then an inopportune desire to sneeze seized her, and would not be repressed. It was useless to shut her mouth tight, or pinch her nose. Sneeze she must, or the top of her head would burst off. She was close to an open cupboard; she thrust her head inside to deaden the sound; but, in her desire to confine the sneeze, she clapped the door so quickly that it caught the end of her nose, and she was forced to groan aloud.

She next flew off to the kitchen, and to Hannah, the cook, who was waiting impatiently, with her sun-bonnet on her head, and a tin pail on either arm, for it was the month of September, and blackberries were ripe.

"I thought you was a-going to stay there all day. I believe you've been asleep," Hannah cried. "And your nose is as red as fire."

"So would yours be, if somebody had shut it in a door for you," retorted Jane. "Asleep, indeed! Nor she neither, for ever so long. Land's sake, I wouldn't go out as child's-nurse, not for double the wages Ann Babbett gets; and I can tell her one thing, the next time she wants to go into the village, to get a tooth pulled, she needn't ask me to tend to that young one's nap, for—"

"Oh, come on! Don't stand here till next month, fretting, or the blackberries'll all be gone," broke in practical Hannah.

"I'll just tell Miss Liscomb we're ready—" "I'll tell her myself," again interrupted Hannah. "You find your sun-bonnet, and don't be a year about it."

Hannah rushed through the entry and up the three steps leading into the front hall, steps over which Jane stumbled daily, and sped along to the half open door of the drawing-room. A young lady sat so busy over a pile of papers that she did not even look up when Hannah said:

"Miss Liscomb, Winny's asleep, and Jane and me's going for the blackberries, and I mean to make such a short cake for tea, as the deacon couldn't beat in a week of Sundays."

She only received a nod for response, and departed with her usual celerity; but in her haste she unintentionally closed the door, and in her absorption Mrs. Liscomb did not notice that such was the case.

Hannah and Jane took their way through the fields. Kate Liscomb pursued her occupation, and naughty little Winny lay on the lounge in the shadowy sitting-room, with her great blue eyes wide open—not certain whether she was asleep or awake, but at all events, so near dreams that for some time she had no inclination to stir.

For a long time the restless sunbeam engrossed her. Then she concentrated her attention on the lilies, and was familiar enough with fairy stories, and near enough asleep, to dream that they were little ladies come to play with her.

Then suddenly she was wide awake; the fairies were gone; the music she had heard was only a fly buzzing; and Winny's imagination came as near down to the commonplace as a child's fancy ever does.

What roused her so effectually was the sight of mamma's bonnet and shawl lying in an easy chair close to the table. To be arrayed in these habiliments was always the height of bliss to Winny—a favour so prized that it was only accorded when she had been especially good and obedient.

But careless Jane had omitted to put the articles in their place before leaving the room; and Winny's passion for masquerading was evoked the instant her eyes fell upon them.

She raised herself, slid from the lounge to the floor, and ran to inspect her treasures. Nurse Babbett would never have been guilty of the fault of putting her to sleep with the dress on, but Jane had been thinking of the hill where the blackberries grew, and the probabilities of Joe Tanner, the miller's son, being drawn thither this very afternoon, and could not stop for trifles.

The bonnet was easy enough to manage, but the shawl presented difficulties, and displayed the total depravity which inanimate objects share along with humanity. First, it knocked off the bonnet which she had so skilfully settled on her head. Then one end of it turned about her feet and sent her sprawling, with her fat legs in the air; and when she got up again the bonnet had flown under the table, and was trying to hide; but Winny dragged it out, crowned herself anew, and struggled with the rebellious drapery until she succeeded in subduing it to her will.

Winny now caught a view of herself in a long mirror, and was charmed with the effect. Immediately she became the Princess Minnehaha, who had figured in a wonderful story related by her mother only the day before.

Presently the princess grew tired of contemplating her image in the glass, and made for the door, which, because it ought to have been kept closed, Jane had, of course, left ajar.

Winny paddled along the passage and passed the drawing-room; had Hannah only left that door open, all would have been well. On went the little adventurer. She stopped in the verandah to peer up at an empty bird's nest which earlier had held eggs, and then four little, fuzzy heads, to be lifted up to which had been Winny's delight, till one day the fuz grew into feathers, and the inmates deserted the nest. Winny had been told that next year she would find other eggs and wee birdies among the leaves. She was always hoping that next year had come—it seemed so long since the pretty-winged creatures had flown away.

Winny glanced longingly toward the rustic gate, which she had been forbidden ever to pass unaccompanied; peeped round at the drawing-room windows, and back at the verandah.

Winny's white kitten sprang out from a rose bush, and darted away into the road.

She forgot mamma's instructions and the punishments which pursue naughty children, and on she walked as fast her draperies would permit.

She thought she was Winny in pursuit of her kitten, but when she reached the gate she discovered that she was Hans Dotman, going out "to see the world, and seek his fortune," as he did in mamma's legend.

Yet she retained a certain consciousness of her own identity, enough to make her realise that she was doing wrong—had there been anybody to see, he could have told that by the half mischievous, half troubled expression in her eyes. But mischief conquered!

She was not Winny, nor Hans, nor even the Princess!

Kitty (who had stopped under the maple trees, and was looking back for her to follow) was Puss in Boots, and she herself the famous White Cat's youthful master.

She hurried down the grassy walk, which stretched under the trees at the side of the highway.

Presently she came to a path that turned to the right, leading into a grove, where was a beautiful miniature lake, that she had often visited with her mother, or with good-natured old nurse Babbett.

Here the kitten stopped and mewed warningly, when she perceived that Winny did not follow her example; but Winny had forgotten her and the legends too, in the entrancing delight of watching a troop of blue and yellow butterflies that were circling about in mysterious play. Kitty set off for the house at a gallop, no doubt with the intention of giving the alarm, but before she got to the gate, she was seduced in her turn from the path of rectitude, by the sight of a grasshopper, which led her a weary dance, and did not allow himself to be caught at last, so that by the time Kitty reached home again, she had forgotten her little mistress and her own good intentions, and went fast asleep on the verandah, instead of fulfilling them, as she ought to have done, if she expected to grow up a virtuous and well-regulated member of the grimalkin family.

On through the grove wandered Winny. The shawl got its fringe entangled in a branch and Winny decided to leave it, while she went on to pick some gorgeous flowers which she espied in the distance.

The lake was not more than an eighth of a mile from the house, not at all too lengthy a ramble for Winny's sturdy little legs; but, owing to the various marvels of bird, insect and flower creation, which demanded her attention in turn, it was a long while before she came to a rise of ground, and saw it sparkling and dimpling not far below.

Winny's precocious fancy was occupied with a wonder as to whether, to-day, the waters were not solid enough to allow her to walk across to where the lilies grew—a question which she had often asked of nurse and mamma, and now herself answered, more to her own satisfaction than either of them had ever done.

The clock had struck three as Hannah left the drawing-room.

Mrs. Liscomb heard it, as one does hear things



[BACK TO LIFE AND LOVE.]

when greatly occupied, almost without being conscious.

She was busy writing letters, and sorting old papers in search of certain memoranda, which her lawyer hoped might be in existence, and perhaps prove of use in the approaching trial; for Kate Liscomb had on her hands that most wearisome and aggravating of burthens—a lawsuit.

I must tell you that this affair was not of her seeking.

It was a legacy which had come to her along with her widowhood, and the comfortable fortune which her elderly husband had left her.

Mr. Liscomb had died nearly four years before, a twelvemonth from the date of their wedding, and just after his longed-for baby opened its eyes to the light.

Mr. Liscomb died as a man ought, in a resigned frame of mind, but that matter of the lawsuit troubled his thoughts almost up to the last moment.

I need not make a long story of the affair.

Mr. Liscomb, years before, had bought several acres of ground in the village. The mayor and Mr. Liscomb had been enemies for a quarter of a century.

The mayor wanted Mr. Liscomb's plot of ground for a bank in which he was interested; pretended to want the remainder for a public square, though the Liscomb party said he meant to get it into his own hands for private speculation.

At all events he discovered, or his lawyers did, that Liscomb's title was defective.

Old Mr. Jameson, who sold the land to Liscomb, had no right to sell it.

So he persuaded some one, supposed to be the true owner, to take up the matter, and everything had been ready for a suit when Mr. Liscomb's death postponed all action for a time.

Some few months later the case was tried, and the young widow won.

Then came a season of rest. But the mayor was not the man to give in.

He hunted out new evidence, and was preparing to bring the matter before a higher court, having engaged the services of a lawyer in London.

This was the part of the business which had caused Kate Liscomb the most annoyance.

She was not yet twenty-four years old, and personally she did not care much whether her competency were increased by the possession of the land or not, though she meant to fight the battle for her dead husband's sake.

But what she did care about was the fact that the mayor and his party had spread a report that she was, in reality, the cause of the suit. That her husband, in his last hours, had urged her to relinquish it.

And that she was going against his wishes in this obstinate determination to deprive the town of a substantial benefit.

This young lawyer, Stephen Neville, had come into the neighbourhood a short time since, and he had believed and said harsh things of her.

She had caught sight of him once, and felt that she hated him. As for his being handsome, as people averred, she utterly repudiated the idea.

"He is as swarthy as the Sultan of Morocco," she said, indignantly.

And, luckily, her friend could not expose vehement Katie's ignorance, for she also laboured under the belief that a ruler in Africa must necessarily be a black man.

And he looks haughty enough to be a pasha with twenty-four tails, and wicked enough to have double that number of harems," Kate added, venomously.

The little explosion did her good. She went home and ate her supper with a relish, and during the next few days she had an opportunity to show her contempt for this abandoned young man, and that did her good, too.

She was still in mourning; but her friends would not let her stay shut up. Who would? A handsome, gold-haired widow, with a rent-roll of a thousand pounds, if such a catastrophe could be prevented?

So they persuaded her to reassume her former position as presidentess of the croquet club, and though she would not present herself on the ground, she had the pleasure of ruling that Mr. Neville should not be elected an honorary member and got her way, though she made a good many enemies among the young ladies in consequence.

Then she had gone to visit a friend, one morning, and when her carriage drove up, the friend's niece came out in a fright to warn her that Mr. Neville was within, and Kate had departed, after speaking a few bitter words, which relieved her mind, though her foes said she had rendered herself ridiculous.

As for Mr. Neville, he had formed a theory in regard to this belligerent widow, whereto he clung as fondly as we all do to our delusions. He fancied her past thirty, fat, red-faced, ignorant and vulgar.

Now, though he might have learned his mistake forty times during each separate day of the week by asking a few questions, he had disdained so to do, and gloried in the opinion which he had built up of her personally from the mayor's sketchy account.

Kate Liscomb had just finished her task when she heard the clock begin to strike again.

"Whatever has come over Winny?" she thought. "The child never sleeps but half-an-hour in the afternoon, and it is striking four!" (she was counting all the while). "Two, three, four, five—nonsense, I have counted wrong."

She sprang up, ran into the dining-room, and looked at the clock—the hour hand pointed to five!

She went on down the hall; the sitting-room door stood open; the sunbeam danced at her, the lilies nodded at her; but Winny was not there.

"The little witch has awakened and gone to play on the lawn," Kate thought. "The dear monkey! I'll warrant Jane had told her she was not to disturb me, and she remembered it when she woke."

She hurried back to the outer door, on to the veranda, looked about the lawn, calling:

"Winny! Winny!"

But there was no response; the child was nowhere visible. Puss woke from her nap, and mewed dolefully, but Kate did not wait to listen to her story.

She hunted through all the rooms on the lower floor, went upstairs, calling a little anxiously on her child, though not yet frightened.

She was out in the verandah again; she caught sight of the open gate. She hastened on, and looked up and down the road. Not a creature was to be seen.

Some impulse—ah, who shall say—perhaps some instinct, more keenly active than our boasted reason, caused her to turn to the right. She ran on, taking the path which led into the grove.

The blue and yellow butterflies flitted before her, as they had done before the child; she

reached the log; the woodlark sat there serenely digesting his repast; he stopped to chirp at her, then hid; she did not see him; she had perceived the shawl.

She seized it—snatched it to her bosom. It was a visible token of the little one's nearness.

"Winny! Winny!"

The child was playing somewhere among the trees, she told herself, trying not to feel frightened, and would put out her pretty, eager face at the call.

"Winny! Come to mamma—come, darling."

No answer. Only the leaves whispered mysteriously at the touch of the breeze; only her own voice resounded in an echo, that was like the moan of some unknown voice calling to her in dread.

She was frightened now. She remembered the lake; the child's love of it; Winny's oft repeated belief that she could walk across the sunny waters, if mamma would allow her.

On she ran.

She could still hear her own voice, at intervals, repeating:

"Winny! Winny!" yet, not her voice—the wail of some unseen watcher, warning her of the horror that lay beyond.

She lived an eternity in each second. Her feet dragged as if they had been tied. On, on, her utterance only a hoarse whisper now.

Oh, the lake! the lake! Should she never reach it? And when she did—when she did. She was too late; she knew she was too late! And the blue sky looking down at her—so near, yet so far, so pitiless, so utterly removed from any sympathy with her anguish. Heaven! His saints, the very father of the child—all standing regardless; not a soul among them to aid the little one.

No, heaven, nothing, her child drowned, she fleeing on in that wild race, amid the black night of her own fancies; brought face to face for the first time, with the awful possibilities in our souls, which remain a sealed secret to us till destiny drives us mad with the presentation of some moment like this.

The lake! the lake! She saw it; she was on the height; she looked down across the blinding sheen of the waters; took in the sweep from mid-glory to the edge. Oh, heaven! A bent tree reaching out over the depths, and on it she beheld her child, stretching out her little arms to pluck a flower.

On, on. A cry. She did not know she uttered it; she did not mean to speak.

"Winny!"

The little one turned quickly; lost her balance; fell headlong into the water.

Oh, the horror of the sound of her body as it struck; oh, the sight of the ripples and foam as they closed like lightning, leaving naught visible but the flower the tiny maid had striven to catch.

Then the mother's frenzied eyes perceived a man dashing out from the wood. He was in the water; he had lifted the child.

Kate reached the bank. The gentleman saw her. He was saying:

"She is safe. Not a minute under."

Not a minute, and a whole eternity had swung before the woman's sight in that space. She tried to snatch her darling; then came a blackness—nothingness.

When Kate Liscomb recovered consciousness she was lying on the ground. The child, wrapped in the shawl, lay with its head on her bosom, sobbing, in terror:

"Mamma, mamma!"

So the mother went mad for a little, as was natural, but the very strength of maternal love speedily brought her to reason—the necessity of soothing her treasure, of making her comprehend that all was well.

Presently Winny ceased her sobs, like the sensible mite she was. Kate rose, remembered the child's preserver, turned, and beheld an utter stranger before her.

But there was nothing wonderful in that, since nowadays the neighbourhood had become a rather favourite haunt for city people.

"I can't thank you," she said, struggling to

keep back her tears. "I wish I could. It's my child, you can understand—my only one."

Then Winny began to laugh and sob at once, and Kate realised that she was behaving foolishly, and so tried to speak more sanely; and the young man stood in open-mouthed sympathy and wonder.

Never in her whole life had Kate looked so beautiful.

She had on a thin, white gown. The open sleeves showed the contour of her perfect arms; her hair had broken loose, and fell in rich masses far below her waist; her glorious eyes were dilated with mingled terror and joy; her whole face transfigured by the passion of gratitude which shook her soul.

"Thank you! thank you!" she cried. "Oh, Winny, we must get home; you are so wet. Oh, my darling! my darling!"

Then she took Winny in her arms; wept outright this time; and the tears relieved her. She was quite sane and sensible after.

"Let me carry her," the gentleman said. "She won't get cold with the shawl wrapped about her. She did not even lose consciousness; she was only frightened."

"I might have done something better than faint," said Kate, disgusted with her own weakness.

"Well, no, I don't think you could," returned the gentleman.

"Where were you? How did you happen to see her? Oh, it was such a mercy."

"I was coming round from the other side of the lake," he explained. "I had seen her just before you called—"

"Oh, if I had kept still, she might not have fallen."

"Yes, she would. I saw she was losing her balance—but don't think about it," he added, hastily, observing Kate shudder.

Still, they naturally could not talk of anything else, try as they might, till suddenly, when then they were near through the grove, Winny raised herself in the gentleman's arms, surveyed him searchingly, and called out with startling abruptness:

"Mamma, he is beautiful. I think you had better kiss him."

It was a case for blushes on both sides, but Kate could not help joining in the gentleman's irrepressible laughter.

"You shall perform the duty, my little elf," he said, and Winny put both wet arms about his neck, and kissed him with such energy that she knocked his hat off.

As his hands were occupied, Kate had to put his hat on for him, and that made them laugh the more, both being in the excitable state whereby human nerves revenge themselves for any great shock.

"Oh, mamma, we've lost your bonnet!" cried Winny. "It's in the water—let's go back for it."

"No, indeed," returned Kate; "let it go."

"Well, it wasn't your best one," observed Winny, consolingly.

They reached the high road.

"My house is just yonder," Kate said, pointing toward the roof of the pretty dwelling, too large to be called a cottage, and not stately enough to deserve the name of mansion, which was visible through the trees.

The gentleman looked at her with the oddest expression she had ever seen on mortal face—a mingling of annoyance, regret and fun, quite indescribable.

"You—you are Mrs. Liscomb?" he stammered.

"And I be Winny 'Iscomb?" rejoined the child.

"May I ask to whom I owe such a debt of gratitude—"

But he interrupted Kate's words by saying quickly, in a voice that was in keeping with the expression of his countenance:

"Please don't thank me—I—I am Stephen Neville, and I wish to goodness I was anybody else, I do indeed."

Kate's first thought was that he must be indulging in an unseemly jest, and she exclaimed

petulantly, and without realising what she said:

"Mr. Neville is quite black—I saw him the other day."

"No, no—that was Mr. Ruthford, whom you took for the Emperor of Morocco," said he, a little maliciously.

"Well," ejaculated Kate, "it was very shabby of Mary Anderson to repeat my heedless speech."

"Since an unoffending man was the victim," returned he; "at least, please admit I am less black than your fancy painted."

But Kate had been too deeply moved in every fibre of her heart to joke upon any subject regarding him.

"I can't help it—we can't be enemies! You have just saved my child's life!" she faltered.

"And he's beautiful!" added Winny, giving him another caress, as damp as a mermaid's would have been.

"Enemies! I should hope not!" he cried, energetically. "A lawyer's profession is one thing—the man is a distinct personage. But we can't stop to argue that out now, this small woman must have her clothes changed."

They were at the gate by this time; Neville did not relinquish his burthen till they were in the house.

"Sit down and rest—you must be tired," Kate said. "My servants are all out—I must attend to Winny myself."

When she and Winny returned to the drawing-room, renovated and put in order, Mr. Neville was still there.

"I waited to be sure that miss was all right," he said. "Now I shall go. Will you kindly let me come to-morrow and inquire after her?"

Kate could not speak; she had been saying her little prayer of thankfulness, teaching Winny to repeat it: words were not possible just yet. He understood better, perhaps, than many men would have done. He stopped, kissed the child, took Kate's hand, held it for an instant, and left the room in silence.

Of course the romantic story got out, and was told in a score of different ways.

The town was in a great state of commotion about Neville's visits to the widow; but the mayor had gone on a summer excursion, so there was nobody who had any right to ask Neville questions.

So two weeks passed. During that time, odd as it may seem, the affair of the lawsuit had not once been mentioned between the defendant and the lawyer of the adverse parties. But this reticence on both sides was the cause of a grave and mutual error; each misunderstood the reason of the other's silence.

Kate believed that Neville had no intention of acting in the suit, and was only awaiting the mayor's return to announce this decision. Neville believed that Mrs. Liscomb was such a sensible woman, that she clearly distinguished between the lawyer and the man.

Had he known her in advance he would never, of course, have taken part against her; but having done so, and having no excuse to withdraw, save the fact that she was a charming person, in whose society he delighted, he could not retire from the case after having publicly put himself in the front, especially as he was convinced that Mrs. Jameson's relatives and the mayor were in the right.

The fortnight came to an end. Neville was obliged to return to town; he had already prolonged his holiday beyond what his conscience pronounced reasonable; but for once in his life the young man had been guilty of the weakness of inventing excuses for keeping a little longer away from his work.

It was so hard to go. He had learned so dearly to love this woman. Nay, there had been no preparatory steps whatever; he had loved her from the first instant he looked into her eyes.

That first meeting seemed very far away. He had lived so much, and so rapidly since then.

All the same, he knew that he had no right to speak, that she would almost be justified in

taking offence, if he did, after only fifteen days' acquaintance.

It was this having to go in silence which gave such a horrible sting to the thought of departure. If he could only tell his love; have the bliss of knowing that she cared, or might learn to care, and so possess the future to rest upon—her letters to cheer him—but to go like this, was being driven out into the darkness indeed.

The sunset of that last day, he rode over to her house; took his horse to the stable, as had grown his habit, and confided him to the care of old John, groom and gardener.

He found Kate sitting on the verandah with Winnie. For a whole hour the child engrossed the conversation, and kept it lively enough, by her exactions and quaint sayings. Then nurse Babbett summoned her to bed. But she would only go, on condition that Neville carried her upstairs himself, and laid her on her little couch, in her mother's chamber.

Kate was still sitting on the verandah when he came down. He proposed to go for a walk, and she consented. They took the path through the grove, without thinking. Suddenly, he said:

"I ought not to have brought you here."

"I like to come," she answered. "It was here—" She paused, and added: "I learned here to be thankful. I never knew what an ungrateful creature I had been all my life, till that awful grief came so near me."

"I wonder when I shall see the place again," he exclaimed.

"Next summer, I hope," she replied.

"Shall I come back? Would you be glad to have me come back?"

He looked in her face as he spoke. What he saw there rendered restraint impossible. Their souls had spoken. To think of conventional rules would have been folly.

"I did not mean to speak," he said, really believing that his heart had found utterance in words, during that whirling instant they had stood, gazing in each other's eyes. "I do not ask you for any pledge—but if I may come back? You know now what you are to me. I thought I knew; but I did not fully realise it, until this moment of parting. On every account, I suppose, I ought not to have spoken. Forgive me! After all, what difference do the circumstances make? They have not been awkward to us, for we have not thought about them. We need not now. For the sake of your love I could forego—"

She stopped him by lifting her hand. She felt as if she had suddenly fallen from a great height. It is the only comparison. Those last words had roused her rudely out of a beautiful dream. Alas! in this bitter instant, she knew that it had been the culmination of a vision begun on that first day of their meeting.

"What is it? What ails you?" he cried, startled by the change in her face.

"What do you mean?" she exclaimed, vehemently. "Don't let me wrong you. No, no, you could not intend to bargain, to say that your relinquishing that odious, unjust case was dependent upon—upon my caring for you."

"Great heavens! I should think not! You couldn't seriously suspect me of such cowardice! No, no, the case stands where it did. I told you the lawyer and the man were two distinct persons."

Kate's impulse was to cry; then she felt faint; then anger mastered every other feeling.

"You don't mean to tell me that you are still occupied with that infamous matter?" she demanded, hotly.

He looked at her in bewilderment.

"I will have an answer! Have you been deceiving me? Are you Mr. Hodgson's lawyer still?" she continued, rapidly.

He had grown white to the very lips, but he replied, steadily:

"I never supposed you doubted it. I thought you never mentioned the business, because you felt that I could not, in honour, retire from the position I had taken."

"You are his lawyer? You intend to plead in that case?"

"Yes!"

His stern eyes met her fiery ones with cold firmness. For an instant it seemed to Kate that she must burst a blood-vessel. This man had been amusing himself at her expense. He had never been in earnest. He had wanted to lead her on to the last moment; perhaps, make her show some weakness, which would prove that she cared for him.

"What was it you said that I must know?" she asked.

"That I love you," he answered.

She burst out laughing—such a cruel, hard laugh.

"That will do," she said. "I am, perhaps, a silly woman. I believe you said I was, before ever seeing me. But I am not quite an idiot."

"Kate! Kate!"

"By what right do you speak my name? Will you go away, sir? Don't you perceive that you have failed—that I have not been duped from first to last—"

"Stop!" he interrupted. "Good heavens, are you mad, or am I?"

"Not I, certainly."

"What is it you accuse me of?"

"I accuse you of nothing! You know best what you meant—probably, in some way, to turn my friendship and gratitude to account in favour of your client."

"Do you mean that?"

"Yes!"

"May heaven forgive you. I never will."

He strode off through the wood without once looking back.

How Kate reached home she could hardly have told. Her passion did not abate for hours; but late that night, as she sat by the bed of her sleeping child, she could remember that, false as he was, she owed her child's life to him. She must see him once more; she must retract her bitter words.

Early the next morning she drove to the station: she would meet him there; after that they should never meet again. She waited till the train was ready to start, but he did not appear, and she learned from some chance words exchanged between two of the railway officials that he had gone at midnight.

She went home. She wrote to him. Before her letter was finished, some friends came in. They talked about the case, of Hodgson's certainty of winning, adding jesting remarks that the vile old man had made about her attempts to win his lawyer. When she was left alone she tore up her letter; it seemed to her that she tore her heart up with it! The bitterest drop of all in her cup was to feel that she had loved the wretch; yes, writhe, struggle as she might, she loved him still.

Four weeks passed. Her case came on. She did not go, there was no reason for her presence. The trial lasted three days. She read Neville's speech in the papers; it was a very powerful one. But Kate won; the jury decided in her favour. Friends came about her with congratulations: her lawyers came expecting compliments. She got away from them all: she felt as if she loathed the whole world. Ten days more elapsed. Then she received a letter, directed in an unknown hand. She opened the envelope; a sealed packet dropped out; on the sheet of paper folded about it were these lines:

"When my son fell ill, he bade me if he died, forward this letter to its address. In his after delirium, he made me understand the whole story. He lives yet. Will you read his explanation? Will you save his life? They tell me there is one hope—it lies in your hands."

And Kate read the letter, written before the case came on, while he felt confident of success: a plain, simple statement of his motives. She believed, now that it was too late, she believed! That evening she was in the house of his mother—beside his bed, and her voice had called him back to life.

Three long weeks more; weeks of suspense, of fear, of hope; at their close, Stephen Neville lay weak as a child upon his pillows, but able to see, to hear, to recognise those about him, and before either Kate or his mother could speak, Winnie was saying:

"Get up, beautiful man, what for do you lie here so long? Nobody isn't drownded, and mamma and I have come to live wia you. So get up right away!" F. L. B.

FACETIÆ.

THE American Rochefoucauld says if you must buy a wife, remember that you can get a better article from the mother who sells her daughter for her daughter's sake than from the daughter who sells herself for her own benefit. He has also discovered the respective natures of a distinction and a difference. He says that "a little difference" frequently makes many enemies, while "a little distinction" attracts hosts of friends to the one on whom it is conferred.

LORD COLERIDGE says it has been calculated that very moment occupied in his court costs the country 10s. Very cheap at the price; few would begrudge buying such valuable results at such a cost.

LORD BEACONSFIELD is going to emigrate. Report credits him with this intention, perhaps wrongfully. He proposes to leave Whitehall for Belgavia.

AN Irishman dining at a club, the other day, is credited with asking, "for the sake of information," when they were going to bring home "that Cleopatra's needle."

THERE isn't very much cream on milkman's milk, but this year the deposit is so thin that the feet of the flies break through and get into the milk. This is discouraging to the flies, and many of them have withdrawn their subscriptions.

FACT FOR MR. KELLY.

A CHANGE which will not be found in the new "Post Office Directory"—The British soldier's change of head-dress. —Judy.

WOMEN'S RIGHTS AGAIN.

It is announced that an English lady, Miss Blanche Edwards, has just passed a successful examination in Paris for the dignity of Bachelier des Lettres. This would look as if there were something wrong somewhere; though, after all, it does not follow that a lady may not be a bachelor of letters, as it is only a question of degree. —Judy.

PERSONAL NEWS.

THE distress of the esteemed member for Peterborough has been greatly increased lately by a painful domestic incident. Last week the hon. gentleman, returning from Hatcham much annoyed at not being able to recognise Arthur Orton among the lunatics congregated there, found his favourite hat cocked very much on one side, and singing "I'm so Whalley tile." The Jesuits had entered the house during his absence and prepared this shocking spectacle for the worthy gentleman. He is recovering by degrees. —Fun.

"AND WHAT IS FRIENDSHIP BUT A NAME?"

MAJOR-GENERAL SCOTT has come to the rescue of those who are ready to cut each other's throats over the main drainage question. He has invented and patented a process "by which town sewage can be converted into cement." This would be just the article with which some of our friends might cement their friendships. —Fun.

ITEM.

THERE must be something about every sign of the Zodiac in an almanac. That's a sign a quâ non. —Fun.

HUMID.

IN consequence of the damp Junes and Julys prevalent during the last few years, the season will in future be known as Humidsummer. —Fun.

DOING IT DACENTLY.

MRS. MACARTHY: "Faith an' I don't want the things at all at all, Biddy O'Brady, though

it's yourself wid your plisint tongue I'd rather have than anyone else to chate me."

B. O'B.: "That's thrue for ye, Mrs. Macarthy, an' shure I don't know anyone else in the wide world I'd be half so plased to chate."
—Fun.

AFTER THE CHRISTMAS FESTIVITIES.

MAMMA (who has ordered a pill in jam): "Well, Cecil, and did you like the nice jam nurse gave you?"

CECIL: "Yes, mamma, and I was a good boy, and only swallowed the fruit. I spat the stone out."
—Funny Folks.

AT THE PANTOMIME.

"Ma, dear," said a little girl at a matinée the other day, "what does this mean at the foot of my programme—'P.T.O.'?"

"That, my darling," replied mamma, "means 'Please turn over.'"

"Why," returned little miss, after a pause, during which the harlequin threw a double somersault into a grocer's window—"I thought only clowns could do that!"
—Judy.

HAY HAY, SIR.

LORD JOHN HAY has been appointed to the command of the Channel Squadron. Then this is the Hay day of the Channel Squadron. Let us hope so.
Fun.

A DIP-PRESSING OMISSION.

MR. SPURGEON'S lecture on candles is disappointing in one respect. It might have been expected that a Baptist minister would have given the first and foremost place to the "dip."
—Funny Folks.

THE OUTS AND THE INS OF IT.

How beautifully our language contradicts itself when we are obliged to admit that what we call out-rages are really done in rages!
—Funny Folks.

THIS IS SPAINFUL.

THE inhabitants of Seville have orange to present the Princess Mercedes with an address, enclosed in a casket worth twenty-five thousand reals, and a diamond-adorned pen wherewith to sign the marriage register. Surely this is the height of Seville-ity!
—Funny Folks.

TEMPLE BAR.

THE end of Temple Bar has come. Its days and its stones alike are numbered.

It looks like a child's puzzle ready to be taken to pieces and put away in a box.

Its statues are gone, and in place of those figures we have these!

The notion is that, when down, it may be put up again elsewhere—in some locality partial to rococo ugliness.

In other words, Temple Bar, now in numbers, is to be bound up according to taste.
—Funny Folks.

UNDER OUR NOSES.

THE Indian Famine Fund has reached £500,000, and at Merthyr the little children and the women are dying of cold and starvation. "Merthyr most foul" is the best way to describe the conduct of Englishmen in this utterly neglected, because too near home, case of famine.
—Fun.

STATISTICS.

THE HERRING FISHERY.—While the fishermen in the North of Scotland have been lamenting a serious fall off in their "takes" of herrings this season, the fishermen of Yarmouth have experienced one of the best seasons of modern times. According to the latest reports the total number of herrings landed at the Fish Wharf was 19,300 lasts of 13,200, or 254,760,000 fish. The largest number landed at the wharf in one day during the season was about 1,000 lasts, or over 13,000,000 herrings. On one occasion the "Corisande," lugger, belonging to Mr. Harrison, came into the harbour with 27 lasts on board, or 356,000 fish. This was the largest catch brought

in at any one time during the voyage by a single boat. The herrings caught in 1872 were 11,451 lasts; 1873, 18,806; 1874, 17,796; 1875, 11,850; 1877, 19,300; total lasts landed in six years, 82,143, or over 1,068,000,000 fish. The number taken in 1876 is not included. This evidently shows that the herring fishery is not falling off; on the contrary, more have been caught in 1877 than in any previous year.

MARRIED THIS MORNING.

MARRIED this morning—how charming that sounds—

How splendid it looks in the paper; The bride wore white satin—how perfectly sweet,

And a veil like a soft silken vapour. "No cards"—how exclusive that sounds, does it not?

"No cake"—they're well up in the fashion;

And to prove to the world they are true millionaires,

"No presents received"—puts the dash on.

"Abroad for a long wedding tour"—that is nice!

We maidens do envy them truly; We're all in a flutter awaiting our turn,

For we can't for our lives take it coolly.

What letters the fair bride sends back to her friends,

I've read Arabella's and Sadie's; She writes that, just think of it, in the old world

They're dining with lords and with ladies.

"Returned, Col. —, with his beautiful bride,

From France,"—how the journals do laud her;

"Their elegant mansion thrown open to-day—

Receptions will now be in order."

True, true, what a recherche time it will be,

Her set will be truly delighted; The grand double parlours will scarcely hold all.

Dear, dear, shall we girls be invited?

• • • • •

"But two short years married and now a divorce!"

Law sakes, dear, who wouldn't have known it;

I thought from the first 'twas a very poor match,

But somehow I never would own it! She's no longer the bright shining star

that she was,

The social horizon adorning;

Miranda, my love, here's the paper just come,

Now tell me who's married this morning.
M. A. K.

GEMS.

WHEN doing what is right, the heart is easy, and becomes better every day; but when practising deceit, the mind labours, and every day gets worse.

KIND words are among the brightest flowers of earth; they convert the humblest home into a paradise; therefore use them, especially around the fireside circle.

NONE of us wish to exchange our identity for that of another; yet we are never satisfied with ourselves. The unknown has a charm, and unless blinded by vanity, we know ourselves too well to appreciate our especial characteristics at a very high rate.

HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

TAPIOCA AND SAGO PUDDINGS.—Border a pie dish with short crust, and put into it a thick layer of jam or any stewed fruit; take two ounces of well-washed tapioca, and put it into a saucepan with one pint of milk, and sugar to taste; simmer gently, until quite soft; pour the mixture over the fruit, and bake in the oven. This may be served hot or cold. Or, take half a pint of fruit syrup, and put it into a saucepan, with one pint of water; sweeten to taste when boiling, add a teaspoonful of sago, and boil twenty minutes, or until quite transparent; put it into a mould and set it in a cold place; when cold, turn it out. Serve with custard round. Or, boil a teaspoonful of well-washed sago in water with any flavouring—vanilla, ratafia, or lemon—and sugar to taste; when soft, add a glass of red wine; boil a few minutes, pour it into a mould, and when set, turn it out. Serve with custard, cream, or with a garnish of red currant or gooseberry jelly.

SAVE OLD PAPER.—Never throw away old paper. It can always be sold for something, and if not sold, is always useful. For instance, after a stove has been blackened, it can be kept looking very well for a long time, by rubbing it with paper every morning. Rubbing with paper is a much nicer way of keeping the outside of a teakettle, coffee-pot and tea-pot, bright and clean, than the old way of washing them in sands. Rubbing with paper is also the best way of polishing knives, tinware and spoons; they shine like new silver. For polishing mirrors, windows, lamp-chimneys, &c., paper is better than dry cloth. Preserves and pickles keep much better if brown paper, instead of cloth, is tied over the jar. Canned fruit is not so apt to mould if a piece of writing paper, cut to fit the can, is laid directly on the fruit. Paper is much better to put under a carpet than straw. It is warmer, thinner, and makes less noise when one walks over it.

MISCELLANEOUS.

VANDERBILT'S WILL.—Litigation has commenced in the New York Courts over the colossal fortune of the late Commodore Vanderbilt, amounting to £20,000,000. The will is contested by one of his sons, in consequence of himself and his sisters being cut off with only a million sterling, while another son received the whole of the remainder.

SALE OF POSTAGE STAMPS.—A change in the arrangements hitherto existing in the matter of discount on postage stamps has been made. The public have been allowed to go to the Stamp Office and to receive a discount of one per cent, on purchases of £10 value. This is now stopped by the Stamp Office authorities, and purchasers must give full price.

SOUTH AFRICAN DIAMONDS.—News from the South African diamond fields states that during October a magnificent gem of 52 carats weight—a pure white frosted stone without spot or flaw—was found by Messrs. Sole, Conolly, and Manning, in their gully in Dutoitspan. It is stated that £3,000 has been refused for it. Another diamond of more than 100 carats has been found in the Kimberley Mine, but its quality was not equal to its weight.

A WOMAN'S WALK.—Miss Bertha Von Hillern completed her walk of 100 miles on November 13 at Philadelphia. The time allotted was twenty-eight hours, and she accomplished the task in fourteen minutes less. She rested altogether two hours and three-quarters on her journey. It is stated that she walked the ninety-fifth mile in fifteen minutes. At the completion of the ninety-sixth mile she was very weak and came near going to sleep. At the end of the ninety-eighth mile she rested for a few minutes. When she stopped her pulse showed 120 pulsations a minute, against ninety-four when she started. She was greatly enfeebled and very drowsy at the end of her walk.

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NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

CHRISTINE.—Use hot water and a clean brush; rub a very little soap on the brush, then dip it into powdered borax and scour well; rinse in hot water, and rub dry with a clean towel, or chambray is better.

TOM.—Recipe for glassers' putty: Whiting, 70 lbs.; boiled oil, 30 lbs. Mix, and add whiting or oil as needed.

H. W.—A little alum added to saffron in soft hot water makes a beautiful yellow ink.

B. K. D.—To remove rust from steel, cover the metal with sweet oil well rubbed in; forty-eight hours after rub with finely pulverised unslaked lime.

ARTHUR A.—A good waterproof cement may be made by mixing glue five, rosin four, red ochre three parts, with a little water.

MABEL.—Ink stains in cotton or linen can be removed by washing in salt and water. This should be done before the fabric is washed with soap.

M. D.—Lace may be restored to its original whiteness by first ironing it slightly, then folding it and sewing it into a clean linen bag, which is placed for twenty-four hours in pure olive oil. Afterwards the bag is to be boiled in a solution of soap and water for fifteen minutes, then well rinsed in lukewarm water, and finally dipped into water containing a slight proportion of starch. The lace is then to be taken from the bag and stretched on pins to dry.

VOYAGER.—It is well known that an exclusive diet of salt provisions induces scurvy, and that at sea or on expeditions where only such provisions can be carried over long periods of time their injurious effects are prevented by drinking lime-juice. But the suggestion has recently been advanced that phosphate of potash is a much better preventive of the malady, and at the same time that salt increases the nutritiveness of salted meat, so that in all cases where such meat is consumed the phosphate should be used as a condiment, the same as chloride of sodium is now employed.

MECHANIC.—Put the engraving on a smooth board, cover it thinly with common salt finely powdered; squeeze lemon juice upon the salt so as to dissolve a considerable portion of it; elevate one end of the board so that it may form an angle of about 45 or 50 degrees with the horizon. Pour on the engraving boiling water from a tea-kettle until the salt and lemon-juice be all washed off; the engraving will then be perfectly clean and free from stains. It must be dried on the board, or on some smooth surface, gradually. If dried by the fire or sun it will be tinged with a yellow colour.

GEORGE G.—The manufacture of bullets is not so simple as it used to be. At Woolwich the melted metal is poured into a receiver, and as soon as it solidifies, but before it is cold, it is forced by hydraulic pressure through cylindrical holes in the form of long strings. This process is to prevent the formation of air bubbles in the bullet, which would cause it, when fired, to swerve from its course. The leaden strings are thence carried to the bullet moulding department, where they are cut into lengths and roughed; then shaped in one machine, and finished in another. After which they have to be plugged. The plugs were formerly made of wood, but are now prepared from a special powder, which solidifies after being pressed into form.

HELL.—You have reason enough to repudiate your engagement with the young man, which we should advise you to do at once, telling him that his temper is too violent to encourage any hopes of happiness in married life.

W. B.—Anciently the most eminent men in literature were denominated grammarians. A society of grammarians was formed in Rome as early as 276 B. C.

G. C.—As a matter of course, many persons earn their livelihood, and some make handsome incomes, by their proficiency in music; but whether you are likely to do anything of the kind no one who is a perfect stranger to you can venture to prophesy.

E. C.—"Music has charms to soothe the savage breast" is a quotation from Congreve's tragedy, "The Mourning Bride."

O. W.—The word creole is derived from the Spanish *criollo*, and now signifies a native of the West Indies descended from European ancestors. The name was originally given to the descendants of the first Spanish settlers in America and the West Indies by native women.

SEARDED. twenty-one, medium height, dark, wishes to correspond with a young lady about twenty, of medium height.

ROYAL SHEETS AND CLEWELINES, two seamen in the Royal Navy, would like to correspond with two young ladies. Royal Sheets is twenty-two, medium height, dark hair and eyes. Clewelines is twenty-one, tall, blue eyes. Must be about twenty, good-looking, fond of home and music.

POLLY AND AGNES, friends, would like to correspond with two young gentlemen about twenty. Polly is eighteen, medium height, brown hair, blue eyes, fond of music and dancing, good-looking. Agnes is seventeen, fond of home and music, medium height, dark blue eyes, considered good-looking.

A. G. and D. S., two friends, would like to correspond with two young ladies. A. G. is twenty, tall, light brown hair and eyes, fair, fond of home. D. S. is twenty-two, medium height, dark brown hair and eyes, thoroughly domesticated.

FLORENCE L. M., twenty-one, medium height, of a loving disposition, would like to correspond with a good-looking gentleman.

LOUISA and LUCY, two friends, would like to correspond with two young gentlemen with a view to matrimony, about thirty. Louisa is fair. Lucy is dark, and rather tall.

SAPPHIRE, RUBY, and DIAMOND, three seamen in the Royal Navy, wish to correspond with three young ladies. Sapphire is twenty-one, tall, dark, good-looking. Ruby is twenty-one, tall, dark, handsome. Diamond is twenty-four, Auburn hair, blue eyes, medium height. Respondents must be fair.

HORACE L., twenty-one, dark hair and eyes, medium height, would like to correspond with a young lady about seventeen.

PERCY, twenty-four, fair, good-looking, fond of home and children, would like to correspond with a young lady with a view to matrimony. Respondent must be about twenty, dark, medium height, good-looking, and fond of home.

ETHEL and HILDERED, two friends, would like to correspond with two young gentlemen. Ethel is twenty, dark hair and eyes, good-looking. Hildred is eighteen, light brown hair, hazel eyes, fair. Respondents must be about twenty-eight, tall.

WASTE NO TIME.

Lost time can never be regained,
But still, my lad, 'tis best
To never overtax your strength—
To have sure hours for rest.

Then in your hours of toil, my lad,
Be earnest, faithful too;
Commence no other piece of work
Until with one you're through.

Be prompt, then count the hours, lad,
You pick up every day;
'Twill seem as if you save the time
Some dawdler throws away.

Discouraged? You have many tasks?
You are too slow to win?
Finish the work which comes in first,
Then on the next begin.

The rest will fall into a file,
And come on one by one,
Like soldiers walking through a pass,
Until your tasks are done.

This secret, lad, of value great,
Since childhood has been mine:
A squad of work is vanquished quick
If brought into a line. M. E. L.

J. C. and H. F., two friends, would like to correspond with two young ladies. J. C. is fifteen, brown hair, blue eyes, fond of home and children. H. F. is fifteen, brown hair, blue eyes, fond of home.

ETHEL and ALICE, two friends, would like to correspond with two young gentlemen with a view to matrimony. Ethel is nineteen, medium height, dark hair, grey eyes. Alice is seventeen, tall, Auburn hair, blue eyes, considered good-looking.

M. F. O., twenty-seven, fond of home, brown hair, hazel eyes, medium height, would like to correspond with a young lady with a view to matrimony. Must be twenty-two, medium height, dark hair and eyes, fond of dancing.

S. W., twenty-one, curly hair, blue eyes, tall, would like to correspond with a young man with a view to matrimony. Respondent must be twenty-two, tall, dark, of a loving disposition.

BLANCHE and GERTRUDE would like to correspond with two young gentlemen with a view to matrimony. Blanche is twenty, brown hair, blue eyes, of a loving disposition, fond of home. Gertrude is eighteen, thoroughly domesticated, of a loving disposition. Respondents must be between twenty and twenty-four, tall, dark, and fond of home.

G. E. W. would like to correspond with a lady about thirty, domesticated, tall.

FAIR POLLY, twenty, tall, brown hair and eyes, would like to correspond with a young man with a view to matrimony. Respondent must be about twenty-four, good-tempered, fond of home and children.

KATE, nineteen, medium height, fair, of a loving disposition, would like to correspond with a seaman in the Royal Navy. Respondent must be about twenty-one, good-looking, dark, of a loving disposition, fond of home and music.

SWORD & LANCE (soldier) wishes to correspond with a young lady about seventeen. He is twenty, brown hair, hazel eyes, fair.

ANNIE, twenty-two, medium height, fair, thoroughly domesticated, fond of home, would like to exchange carte-de-visite with a gentleman.

NIPPING LEVER, MIDDLE STEP, and TURBOT POINTER, three sailors in the Royal Navy, would like to correspond with three young women with a view to matrimony. Nipping Lever is twenty-six, dark, black hair and eyes. Middle Step is twenty, golden hair, blue eyes. Turbot Pointer is twenty-one, light hair, fair, blue eyes, good-looking.

E. T. and B. L., two friends, would like to correspond with two young ladies. E. T. is nineteen, tall, light hair, blue eyes. B. L. is twenty, tall, dark hair, good-looking, fond of children.

ELEVATING ARC, CAPTAIN TOSH, GUNNERY JACK, and FRICTION TUBE PIN, four seamen in the Royal Navy, would like to correspond with four young ladies with a view to matrimony. Elevating Arc is tall, good-looking, of a loving disposition. Captain Tosh is dark. Gunnery Jack is tall, fair. Friction Tube Pin is tall, good-looking, fond of home. Respondents must be about twenty-three.

W. W., twenty-five, medium height, fair, and of a loving disposition, would like to correspond with a young lady. Must be about twenty, brown hair and eyes, fair, good-looking.

ALFRED and JOHN, two friends, wish to correspond with two young ladies with a view to matrimony. Alfred is eighteen, medium height, brown hair, blue eyes, tall. John is nineteen, brown hair and eyes, fair, of a loving disposition.

MAY M. and EMILY L. would like to correspond with two young gentlemen. May M. is nineteen, brown hair and eyes, dark. Emily L. is seventeen, dark hair, brown eyes.

E. L. and K. E. would like to correspond with two young gentlemen. E. L. is nineteen, Auburn hair, blue eyes, loving. K. E. is eighteen, dark hair, grey eyes, and tall.

M. C., nineteen, medium height, dark hair, brown eyes, wishes to correspond with a young gentleman. Must be twenty, fair, light hair, blue eyes, medium height, and dark.

COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED:

ANNIE is responded to by—X. Y. Z., seventeen, light blue eyes, fair.

HANDBY by—Bessie, twenty, light brown hair and eyes.

FREDERICK P. by—Agnes, seventeen, brown eyes, fond of home and children.

JOHN R. by—Laura, nineteen, dark brown hair and eyes, loving.

O. L. M. by—Alsie S., seventeen, brown hair and eyes, thoroughly domesticated, fond of home and music, and tall.

CAPTAIN OF THE HEAD by—Nancy L., seventeen, hazel eyes, light hair.

CARRY by—Magnet Bar.

MARIAN by—Brameter Bill.

LOUISA by—Q. H. B.

ELIZA by—Augustus, tall, dark, and of a very loving disposition.

LOTTIE by—George, nineteen, dark, medium height, and fair.

KATE by—Harbert, eighteen, fair, medium height, and good-looking.

DAISY by—X. Y. Z.

E. M. by—Lonely Ada, twenty-two, dark, loving, fond of home.

H. G. F. by—Emily, tall.

GRACE by—Noll, eighteen, dark, medium height, and good-looking.

HARRY P. by—Kate D.

L. N. by—E. H., dark brown hair, blue eyes, medium height, of a loving disposition, good-looking, and fond of home.

M. W. G. by—Maggie H., twenty-two, dark hair and eyes.

L. J. by—T. H.

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